



Labor's Vision for Australia.

Speeches from Labor Party Leader,
Anthony Albanese.

Foreword.

When the pandemic turned the world upside down, Australians responded magnificently.

It was the latest challenge we have had to face as a nation. Indeed, when I began my series of Vision Statements in October 2019, coronavirus was not a word on anyone's lips – but we were already in crisis.

Fires were burning across Australia, wreaking devastation and encircling the planet with smoke. We already had a weakening economy and growing job insecurity. Australians were worried about the future of their own jobs, and the jobs their children would have in the future. They were anxious about technological change greater than at any time in human history.

The changing climate also presents a challenge we cannot ignore, likewise the ageing of our population. In this evolving world, even the continued health of our democracy is not something we can simply take for granted.

Now, more than ever, Australians need a clear and positive sense of the road ahead, and that is what the Vision Statements were designed to do.

The world is changing and we have to adapt. Not just to keep pace with change, but to take advantage of the opportunities that exist even amid the greatest challenges. There are so many ways to make the most of the opportunities before us, ranging from reconnecting with science, to realising the potential of regional Australia.

In that first Vision Statement, the Australian Labor Party turned our focus to the challenges of the

future – a plan for job creation driven by Labor's enduring values of fairness, security and the power of government to change lives for the better.

As the child of a single mother on the invalid pension, who grew up in public housing, I appreciate the importance of managing money. I understand the power of aspiration that parents have for a better life for their children.

Labor knows we must pursue policies which are aimed at creating wealth, as well as consider its distribution.

Just as Labor values have been the right values to get us through the pandemic, they will also be the right values for the recovery.

With the end hopefully looming for this time of coronavirus, we are faced with a choice. We can try to go back to how things were before the pandemic. Or, as laid out in these Vision Statements, we can make the right choice and protect our citizens by giving them a fair shot at a prosperous future.

A fairer and better future. A future built in Australia. A future in which no one is left behind and no one is held back

Anthony Albanese,
Leader of the Australian Labor Party

Contents.

02	Honour, Responsibility and a New Vision
06	From the Rear Vision to Looking Ahead
12	Jobs and the Future of Work
21	Labor and the Economy
28	Labor and Democracy
36	Respecting and Valuing Older Australians
43	Leadership in a New Climate
49	Australia Beyond Coronavirus
56	Science and the Economic Recovery
64	Driving Growth in Regional Australia
72	Budget in Reply

Honour, Responsibility and a New Vision.

Media Conference upon being elected
unopposed as Labor Leader
27 May 2019
Sydney

I'm honoured and very proud to be elected the 21st leader of the Australian Labor Party. I understand the responsibility that I have been given – a responsibility not just to the party and its supporters, but to our nation. I have been elected to lead but I pledge to always remember that we are also here to serve, to serve all Australians.

I have always seen Labor as more than a party. We are a movement for a better Australia. I want to see a larger, more inclusive party. And the first thing I want to say to all those millions of Australians who were disappointed with our performance and outcome on election night – join up. Get involved. Make us stronger for the next challenge.

I want to reach out also to those who didn't support Labor at the election. Whether they're working people, whether they're small and family businesses, whether they're young or old, regardless of where they live.

One in four Australians I note didn't vote for either of the potential governments; either the Coalition or Labor. Both of the potential government parties in this nation need to acknowledge that there's a weakness in the system when the level of the vote is that high.

I want to reiterate my congratulations to Scott Morrison on his election as prime minister. I say to him that I will hold his Government to account, strongly, forcefully. I am a values politician. But I also say this to Scott Morrison – I'm not Tony Abbott. People want solutions, not arguments. They have conflict fatigue. Some reforms require bipartisan support.

Our nation is diminished by not recognising First Australians in our Constitution and while Indigenous Australians are the most disadvantaged in our nation, Labor stands ready to cooperate on how we advance the agenda of the Uluru statement.

I am a progressive. I believe that government has a role in ensuring that change is in the interest of the majority of Australians.

I'm an economist by training. At university, I studied the full spectrum of economic thought. As I've always believed that you had to understand and respect different perspectives, that's why even in government I was one of the few people who talked to people who I had fundamental disagreements with in the media. I have always believed in engaging and learning each and every day.

I believe in a strong economy. I support job creation as the core value that governments have to achieve. Our 27 years of uninterrupted economic growth began with Labor reforms. We avoided recession in

2009, under Labor. It didn't happen by accident. It happened because the people in that government, including Kevin Rudd and Wayne Swan, made the right decisions. When it comes to debt to GDP, the fact is that the Coalition has given us the four worst years on record. We face circumstances whereby economic growth, wages, and living standards are all under pressure. The international economy is very fragile.

The economy must work for people, not the other way around. I view unions and business as having common interests. The key to growing the economy is investing in infrastructure and investing in people through education and skills. We have enormous opportunities.

We're located in the part of the world that is seeing the fastest economic growth, not just in recent times; in human history. In the Indo-Pacific-Asia region. That presents an opportunity for us.

I believe in practical outcomes. Look at what I have actually done in government and what I argued in opposition: the creation of Infrastructure Australia; the aviation reforms that took aviation in this country from a position where it was very vulnerable into a position of strength; the National Broadband Network; local government infrastructure; building community-based infrastructure, based upon local

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priorities right throughout the nation; urban policy and engagement in our cities; regional economic development, including my ongoing and what will be continuous advocacy for High Speed Rail down the east coast of this country.

On my watch, there was more investment in public transport in six years than occurred in the previous 107 years between federation and the election of the Rudd government.

But as Billy Bragg said, not everything that counts can be counted. We shouldn't judge the economy separately from the people it's meant to serve. I believe in an inclusive society, one that looks

after the most vulnerable, we must promote opportunity regardless of where people live, their gender, their ethnic background, their age, their faith, or who they love.

Social justice must be a practical objective, not just a slogan. We can begin by committing as a nation to dealing with the scourge of domestic violence against women.

So it's not in my view economic or social policy – it's both, hand in hand. And that's where aspiration comes in. I get aspiration. My life has turned out much better than anyone who looks at its humble beginnings could have possibly predicted.

That's in part thanks to Labor reforms and policies. People do aspire for a better life, but in the land of the fair go they aspire to more than things than themselves. They aspire to a better life for their family, for their friends, for their local community and for their nation.

There is indeed such a thing as society. And we all depend on it. They also aspire for their kids to enjoy a better natural environment than the one that we enjoy today.

Let me say this unequivocally – the science is in, climate change is real. We must act. Not just as a nation, but as a global community. Action will create jobs. It will benefit our economy and it will benefit our environment. The business communities say that. They are crying out for certainty and it is time that the government worked with the opposition to deliver that certainty going into the future.

So, I am neither a climate sceptic, nor am I a market sceptic when it comes to action on climate change, because I have listened to business and sat down with them. But the time for the ongoing conflict over these issues surely is over.

I understand that it is a big mountain that we have to climb. There are only three Labor leaders who have led Labor into government from opposition since World War II. They are, of course, Gough Whitlam, Bob Hawke and Kevin Rudd. To the great Gough, I pay tribute to you.

To Bob Hawke – he gave me the great honour of being the guest speaker at the 20th anniversary of my election to Parliament. He also gave me the tremendous honour of launching Karen Middleton's biography of me in 2016. I'll miss Bob - great company and

tremendous advice and I think he is a model for what is best about Labor in government.

Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd remain very close friends of mine and I have spoken to them in recent days. I think both of those governments will be recorded well by history. But because we weren't long-term governments some of the reforms that we put in place weren't entrenched – unlike the reforms of the Hawke and Keating governments, such as Medicare and superannuation and so many of those dramatic changes which were made.

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In my political activity up to this point, I have concentrated over the last decade on infrastructure – building railways, roads, bridges, airports. Now, as Leader of the Labor Party, I want to build something else. I want to build relationships between the Labor Party and those people who voted for us, but also those people who wanted to vote for us, who were open to voting for us, but who felt like they couldn't.

I want to build bridges with people in the regions and the suburbs. I want to build relationships with people across the spectrum. I do say to those people up front in the media, who will be clamouring for instant “what’s the program in March 2022,” which is when I expect the election to be at the latest, I intend to hasten slowly.

There are many lessons we need to learn from the election outcome. One of them is that the election is not determined six months beforehand, or even three months beforehand, perhaps even some might say, not a month beforehand.

I intend to be a consultative leader. I intend to hasten slowly when it comes to policy development and you will have to be patient because, as we have all seen, there is a lot of concentration in recent on about what the next fortnight’s poll is.

Perhaps there will be a bit less now and I would recommend that very much to both people who are activists in politics, and those who are observers of politics.

I agree with Prime Minister Morrison that this is, indeed, a great country. The difference that we have is I think it can be much, much better and I believe that a Labor government can make it better.

I intend to live by the dictum: what you see is what you get. I do have strong values. I do have strong ideas. That doesn’t mean they are not open to change because the truth is when facts change, you should change and you should always be open to engagement.

There has been some commentary recently that the idea that I would reach out to business, as well as the union movement, somehow is a change. If that is the case, you haven’t been paying attention.

Have a look at the Infrastructure Australia model. Have a look at what I did in government. Have a look at speeches I have given since we have been in Opposition, including the Chifley Lecture, the Button Oration, the Whitlam Oration. I have been pretty consistent in my views over my time in politics.

This is an incredible honour. It is not one that I anticipated. I only thought of running for the leadership of the Labor Party in 2013. Growing up where I did, my mum used to say to me, in terms of aspiration: “Get a good job” and I started work in the Commonwealth Bank the Monday after I finished my last HSC exam. She said “Make sure you own your own house”.

I think that is one of the things that I believe the country needs to address – the issue of housing affordability.

So I will work very hard. For those who have said this is a daunting task, I say this: at the end of our period in government I was Deputy Prime Minister. I was Leader of the Government in the House of Representatives. I was Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government. I was Minister for Communications and the Digital Economy. I am up for a hard job. I am up for hard work.

I am heartened and empowered by the support I have received from Caucus colleagues, from party members, from union affiliates and from people who have contacted me, saying that they didn’t vote Labor last Saturday, but they are open to voting Labor next time round.

I intend to ensure that they do and I intend to do my best to work with the Australian people to ensure that we elect a Labor government next time.



From Rear Vision to Looking Ahead.

Address to the National Press Club following release
of the Review of Labor's 2019 Federal Election
Campaign
8 November 2019
Canberra

Before the release of Craig Emerson and Jay Weatherill's review in Labor's election performance, I saw comment from people stating confidently that the review would evade the big issues and gloss over the real reasons why Labor lost.

Well, anyone who has had the chance to read the document would have to admit that it's a thorough, honest, and for Labor people, sometimes uncomfortable read.

We didn't create the review to tell us what we wanted to hear.

Unlike Cleo Magazine, there's no sealed section. Unlike the Mueller report, it hasn't been redacted. Unlike Angus Taylor's alleged City of Sydney travel documents, it won't be disowned. And unlike the Prime Minister's guest list for the White House reception, you won't need to put in an FOI request to see it.

I want to thank Craig and Jay for telling it like it is. Our whole democracy, not just the Labor Party needs a dose of honest, plain speaking.

We know the outcome was not due to a lack of effort and I do want to pay tribute to the extraordinary commitment of Bill Shorten who worked so hard each and every day for six years to return Labor to government.

Bill was determined to offer hope and genuine reform to benefit all those who depend upon a Labor Government. And in my friend Tanya Plibersek, he had a loyal and dedicated Deputy who campaigned tirelessly for the cause of Labor.

Our Parliamentary team and candidates were assisted by tens of thousands of rank and file members and volunteers and I thank them for their amazing efforts.

And the trade union movement campaigned strongly on wages, jobs and the growing inequality in our society.

The ALP doesn't belong just to our members; it belongs to our democracy.

And I want those who voted for us in May, and those who didn't, to know that we are listening to them.

But I do intend to move on very quickly from debating the review.

From examining the recent past, to anticipating and creating a better future.

Part of that moving on is for those of us who were privileged to serve over the last two terms to accept collective responsibility for the disappointing outcome.

I know that Labor's supporters are already keen for us to get started on developing a new platform. Hurry up, they're saying.

But in this Melbourne Cup week I got some handy advice, "always have the race won, but never be in a hurry to win it". Does anyone here remember which horse led past the finishing post on the first lap on Tuesday?

I should perhaps be frustrated at some of the criticism we've copped for not finalising our platform for the 2022 election in the first few months of this term. But in a strange way, I'm not. It actually gives me hope.

You see, I love the passion and belief that lies behind it.

I got that passion and belief myself at school at St Mary's Cathedral, and particularly from my single mum, Maryanne who raised me in the council house she herself was born in.

Mum had a tough life but never wavered in her support for the Catholic church, the cause of Labor, and love for the South Sydney Rabbitohs. My passion and belief gives me energy.

The 'True Believers' are angry and hurt at Labor's loss – and so am I. They're itching to win next time around – and so am I. They're ambitious to change the world – and so am I.

Although in truth life would be easier if they gave us just a little bit of time to do it.

You know, they're a passionate bunch. I sometimes think that if they'd been there to see Jesus rise on the third day, some of Labor's supporters would have said: "Well, what took you so long?"

As someone born Labor I understand the disappointment and frustration with the unexpected result. But one of the lessons is that elections are actually won on election day, not one month or even six months before.

And certainly not two years before.

The review has many technical elements about polling and campaigning that I will leave to the pundits and campaign professionals to talk about. The Australian people aren't interested in the minutiae. Indeed, they want us to talk less about insider stuff and more about our positive vision for the country.

They also want less conflict.

I said in my first statement as Labor Leader that people had conflict fatigue. I'm going to fight hard to hold this Government to account – each and every day. It's what an opposition leader must do. But I want to do something more. I want to offer the Australian people something better. And to do that, I want our party to change.

So let's cut to the chase. The message to us is that too many people were confused or even frightened by our policies or didn't trust us to implement them. We failed to present a clear and concise narrative which explained an optimistic sense of what our country could become.

I am going to change that.

I am going to change the culture of our party and ensure we are worthy of the people's respect and trust.

I am going to give Labor a new policy direction that will create an optimistic future for our people. One with aspiration at its heart. Not just for individuals, but for families, for communities and for our nation.

And by doing that Labor will be in the strongest position to win the next election.

Let me start with the restoration of respect and trust. Without them we can't achieve anything and won't deserve to.

Any honest assessment of our organisation will admit that in some places our moral image is poor. It breaks my heart to admit that, but it's true.

I want that to change.

I'm old fashioned in my loyalty to the Labor cause. I believe Labor is a movement with the capacity for greatness. During our long history, it's been populated by heroes. I've had no greater hero than Tom Uren – my mentor and the father figure I never got to grow up with.

Tom fought hard against the Japanese in Timor, was taken prisoner, was incarcerated in Changi and worked on the Thai-Burma railway where he watched his friends die of beatings, disease and malnutrition. Despite himself being sick, he often received severe beatings for standing up for the weaker men. Think of the courage that took!

Then near the end of the war, he was sent to Japan as a slave labourer, where he witnessed the atomic bomb being dropped on Nagasaki. Despite all his sufferings at the hands of the Japanese military and all the hunger he endured, which reduced him to skin and bones, when he was given the only Red Cross food parcel he ever received, he shared it with the malnourished Japanese men who worked alongside him.

That's greatness.

It's no wonder that public figures back then enjoyed a level of respect seldom enjoyed today.

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In recent times, the behaviour of some individuals, including the senior officials of branches and affiliated organisations has been completely beyond the pale. It has left many party members, me included, feeling embarrassed. It must change and it will.

Tom Uren taught me to fight – through actions, not just words. And that fight to repair Labor's moral fabric is already underway.

John Setka has been removed from the Party, at my insistence. His opinions and his behaviour will not be tolerated in the modern ALP. I don't want his image to represent me or our party.

And Michael Lavarch's review of the structures and processes of the NSW Party Office has recommendations to clean up Sussex Street once and for all. The bad culture of the NSW branch office has been allowed to continue for too long. I'm calling time on it.

The moral shadows cast over the Labor Party by the Setkas and some in the NSW Party Office are being removed by a strong and self-administered dose of sunlight.

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No one held back, no one left behind.

We need to win back the Australian people's trust and respect because we want them to embrace the positive plans we will lay out for the future of our country.

Due to the lack of a coherent narrative, the confusion caused by too many policies, the raising of fear campaigns – some based on outright lies – the Australian people didn't have the confidence to elect Labor. It's all outlined in the review document.

I'm not interested in excuses. We got it wrong. Not everything was wrong of course, but enough was. We lost an election, which given the chaos on the other side, we should have won.

So our agenda must change. If you do the same thing, you should expect the same result.

I am going create a new policy agenda to modernise our country for the benefit of all its people.

History shows that Labor only wins from opposition when our vision is positive, aspirational and modernising.

Labor only wins when we spell out how we can all work together to make our country a wealthier and better place.

Labor only wins when our agenda embodies the future.

It's a big job, and I'm going to spell out a timetable for achieving it today. A timetable that is strategic and ensures proper input into orderly and detailed policy development.

It's obvious that there was resentment towards some of our 2019 election policies including franking credits. Whilst the call on the Budget of franking credit arrangements is large, many small investors felt blindsided and it opened up a scare campaign.

Having said this, for Labor a progressive tax system is the foundation stone for building aspiration and upward mobility, as well as looking after those who need assistance.

To me it's one of the great ironies of our times that Labor has been labelled anti-aspirational.

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I stand before you as an embodiment of Labor's belief in aspiration – the son of a single mum who wanted more for the son she raised in public housing.

I judge people by their character, not their background. That's why I have so many friends from all walks of life.

Our objective should be to promote unity, but we have a Prime Minister who is moving closer to the divisive politics we see in the United States and the United Kingdom.

There's something increasingly transparent about his behaviour and his political trajectory.

His attacks on the right to protest, his denunciations of business people who dare to have a social conscience, and his Lowy Institute speech parroting

dangerous foreign ideas – “negative globalism” – are all characteristic of a reactionary, not a conservative, let alone a liberal.

Frankly, some of it is a bit weird. Maybe even a bit sinister.

In its place I want a modernising, aspirational, optimistic approach to Australian politics that everyone can get behind.

I therefore intend to engage with those who have kept the Labor faith, but also reach out to the people who couldn't bring themselves to vote for us last time.

I understand why many of them were reluctant to support us. When you have to work hard for every inch of advancement in life, success can seem fragile, and it's easy to see why some are nervous about the results of their hard work potentially being threatened.

And it's only natural in such circumstances to feel nervous about policy change, especially when the sheer number of proposed changes makes misrepresentation by our opponents too easy.

On the campaign trail and since I heard people saying how much they resented being called “the top end of town”, when they came from backgrounds much like my own. I heard them say that Labor needed to be more in touch with the realities of the modern economy and the difficulties of running a small business.

I say to those people, I hear you. We hear you.

They're the sort of criticisms you can easily dismiss in the heat of an election campaign, particularly when every poll puts you ahead, but upon reflection, it's obvious those people had a point.

The economy has changed, maybe even more than we think.

People who years ago stood out in the workplace because they had the organising ability to become shop stewards, are now organising their own businesses. As the economy and society changes, so too must Labor.

As we approach the third decade of the 21st century our Labor agenda must differ from the days when only a handful of people were university educated and over half the workforce were members of unions.

And that Labor agenda has been changed by 28 years of uninterrupted economic growth.

Uninterrupted because Labor's economic leadership kept us out of recession during the catastrophe of the Global Financial Crisis.

After those 28 years we're far wealthier than ever, though in many ways less equal than ever and some groups of people, like our farmers right now, are facing particularly hard times.

We have to respond to these changes, update our approach and ensure Labor is seen as the party of the future, not a party of grievances.

The Australian people are looking to Labor to chart a new course toward a stronger nation and a better quality of life.

We took a lot of policy to the last election. But not enough of a story.

The review has found that people were less sure about our narrative, or big picture. How it all fits together.

If people feel unsure they're more likely to side with the status quo.

We need to emphasise that Labor seeks government to increase the economic security of the vast majority. Our opponents think government should get out of the way and let the market rip and somehow wealth will trickle down.

We know that an adherence to trickle-down economics means it rains misery on working people.

Our opponents pretend that change can be stopped. Labor wants to shape change in people's interests.

Our policies will be built around five themes which we have already started to roll out through our Vision Statements. They are:

1. Jobs and a strong economy that works for people, not the other way around;
2. A fair Australia where no one is left behind – where education drives opportunity, health care is delivered through your Medicare card, work security and conditions are improved and older Australians are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve;

3. Infrastructure that boosts productivity and is capable of transforming our economy, such as High Speed Rail to tackle urban congestion, promote decentralisation and build stronger regions;
4. Climate change action that recognises that this is an opportunity as well as a threat;
5. Providing national security through foreign policy that stands up for our national interests in the globalised world, while recognising our three policy pillars of support for multilateralism, regional engagement as well as the US Alliance.

The review released yesterday was the first of four stages of our big 'Labor Renewal Project'.

This first stage – Review – rules a line under the period of trying to understand and come to terms with the devastating loss we suffered in May.

The second stage – Vision – will see the release of a series of Vision Statements that will map out the new directions our policies will be heading in.

The third stage – Platform – will rewrite and consolidate the Labor Platform, which has been described as possibly the longest of any comparable centre-left party in the world. I want it to tell a positive and compelling story about the future of our country and how it can be renewed to the benefit of all our people.

And the fourth and final stage – Policy – will see the release of Labor policy over the course of the term, but particularly closer to the election.

We're going to be focused very firmly on the future.

But at every step we will be also holding the Government to account.

We're not going to make the mistake of rushing it and putting out all our policies before we know the economic and political context of the next election.

But let me assure you of this. The Labor Party is going to advance a progressive and practical agenda consistent with our values. Our policy agenda will be bold and clear. And by the time the next election comes about, Labor is going to be back as the party of growth, the party of aspiration, the party of social justice, the party of nation building, the party of our natural environment, the party of science and the party of the future.

I'm not interested in just changing the appearance of the party and its policies. I'm going to change their substance.

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Labor's been a wonderfully unified organisation for the past six years. This big Labor Renewal Project will engage all our members, affiliates and supporters in a bid to confound the trend away from centre-left parties across the world. It will bring us even closer together.

By allaying unnecessary fears. By helping everyone aspire to something better for themselves, their families and their communities. And by exciting people about the possibilities of a more prosperous and better future for our country.

We can start a movement for change and reform that will return Labor as the party of aspiration, the party of the mainstream and the party of government.



Jobs and the Future of Work.

Vision Statement 1: Address to the Committee for
Economic Development of Australia (CEDA)
29 October 2019
Perth

Australia is at a crucial intersection. We have a weakening economy and growing job insecurity. We face environmental, demographic and geopolitical challenges.

But we have a Government that has no agenda, let alone a plan for the future. They are in denial about insecure work. About wage stagnation. About declining living standards.

They are in denial about our choked cities and our starved regions. They are in denial about energy and science. And they are more interested in division than inclusion. But above all, they are characterised by being scared of the present and terrified of the future.

I'm optimistic about the future. Provided we get the policy settings right.

The Australian Labor Party has begun laying down the framework on which we will build the policies that we will take to the election. Labor has turned its focus forward. We must face the future in the interests of our country.

And we will be guided every step of the way by our values. Labor values. Values that have at their heart the desire to lift up our fellow Australians and help us reach our full potential not just as individuals, but as a nation.

Our policies will always need to adapt to the changing world around us. But our values are enduring.

The very sites of economic production and exchange are transforming rapidly. The global economy is more integrated and competitive than ever before. And in that changing world, we are confronting an intensifying international debate over energy production and the environment.

More and more women are claiming their right to employment and economic security, forever changing the face of – and the culture within – the workplace.

We are in the midst of a technological revolution. It is acting as both a catalyst for disruption and providing an unprecedented opportunity to improve our lives.

It is a revolution that is changing everything: the way we live, the way we learn, the way we relate to each other and, of course, the way we work.

This all goes to the very heart of Labor's mission: Jobs and the future of work.

We understand work isn't just about a pay cheque. With work comes purpose, self-confidence and

dignity. Good jobs strengthen families and communities.

Australians are worried about the future of their job and the jobs their children will have in the future. They are anxious about facing technological change greater than any time in human history. They deserve reassurance that the future of work will help them get ahead and not fall behind. And they expect Government to do its bit by working just as hard as they do.

As a party born of working Australians, which arose from the trade union movement, Labor will fight to see aspirations rewarded and hopes realised. Australians want their children to have better lives and more opportunities than they enjoyed.

Many fear this won't happen – that their children will have fewer opportunities. And they are right to be anxious. They are right to be worried about weak growth and stagnant wages.

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While government cannot stop change, it can certainly shape change. And Labor's priority has always been, and always will be, to shape change in the interests of people.

The current Government's Finance Minister has even described low wages growth as “a deliberate design feature of our economic architecture”.

The pace of change is confronting. I get it.

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Only Labor can lead Australia confidently into this future. We have done it before and we will do it again.

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Like Bob Hawke and Paul Keating, I understand that building the future means we must first and foremost be in the business of creating wealth, as well as ensuring it is distributed fairly.

Labor is proudly and resolutely pro-growth. We understand that successful businesses and a vibrant economy are essential prerequisites for job growth.

The contribution made by 2.2 million small businesses is particularly important. They employ 4.9 million Australians, nearly half of all private sector employees. Ensuring they thrive and flourish is vital to our national prosperity. So too is finding and harnessing new drivers of prosperity.

We need to shape our changing economy so it serves the Australian people, not the other way around. Not yesterday's economy. Tomorrow's economy.

When it comes to building that economy, technology and innovation are our allies. They are key to boosting productivity.

We must find new ways to use our resources more effectively – especially the talents of our people. As much as technology can play a part here, people will matter even more. How we skill them up and prepare them for change is crucial.

Not just in producing the goods and services we buy, sell and trade in the private market and overseas, but also those public goods and services people expect and deserve – such as a clean environment, quality health and education, and a proper, fair safety net.

As economist Paul Krugman famously said, “Productivity isn't everything, but in the long run it is almost everything.”

The future belongs to those countries that can innovate, adapt and adjust. Complacency is our enemy.

As well as lifting economic productivity in the short to medium term, technological advancements are also opening new doors of wealth and job-creation opportunities.

And those opportunities are made even more significant thanks to our geographical position on the doorstep of the world's fastest growing region in human history.

We are in the box seat to reap the benefits of the Asian century – if we get it right.

And some of those opportunities lie within the global efforts to tackle one of the greatest challenges we face today: climate change.

The world is decarbonising. With the right planning and vision, Australia can not only continue to be an energy exporting superpower, we can also enjoy a new manufacturing boom. This means jobs.

Consider the direct exports of LNG from northern Australia to South East Asia. Or the dividends from a hydrogen economy that can help our major trading partners, such as Japan and South Korea, make the switch to hydrogen.

This goal is also consistent with our ambitions as set out in the Asian Century White Paper. It urged Australia to improve human security through the development of resilient markets in basic needs, such as energy.

Indeed, experts tell us achieving 50 per cent renewable energy at home while building a hydrogen export industry would create 87,000 good, well-paid jobs. Chief Scientist Alan Finkel sees a hydrogen export industry that in ten years could be worth \$1.7 billion.

Working towards a low-carbon future provides opportunities to revitalise the Australian manufacturing sector. Opportunities that are all about jobs.

Yet our current policy settings barely acknowledge climate change, let alone seek to exploit the opportunities that, over time, can come with the global shift to renewables.

In the century that's before us, the nations that will transform into manufacturing powerhouses are those that can harness the cheapest renewable energy resources.

We have the highest average solar radiation per square metre of any continent. We don't need to create nuclear power when every day we can harness the power of the greatest nuclear reactor in the solar system: the sun.

We also have some of the best wind and wave resources.

And we have some of the best engineers and scientists, breaking the barriers of what is possible.

Australia can be the land of cheap and endless energy – energy that could power generations of metal manufacturing and other energy intensive manufacturing industries.

Our resources and capability also offer us the scope to be the capital of mining and processing of the key ingredients of the renewables revolution.

Australia is the second largest producer of rare earth elements.

We have the greatest reserves in the world of iron and titanium, the second greatest reserves of copper and lithium, and the third greatest deposits of silver.

Just as coal and iron ore fuelled the industrial economies of the 20th century, it is these minerals that will fuel the clean energy economies of the 21st. Among these resources, there is one that the West Australian Government has identified as key to the diversification of the state's economy – and that is lithium.

Right here in WA, we are seeing the emergence of an industry adding upstream value to a resource – creating new processing and manufacturing industries and, crucially, creating regional and metropolitan jobs.

As electric vehicles, energy storage systems and smart devices become more mainstream, the global demand for lithium batteries will explode. And WA is ready.

Already WA has seven operational lithium mines. Two lithium processing plants are currently being built and a feasibility study is under way for a third.

And it's all supported by a research centre that's taking Australia a step closer to the development of a battery manufacturing industry.

Yesterday I visited Mineral Resources in Kwinana with local MP Madeleine King and Shadow Minister for WA Resources Matt Keogh to see firsthand this exciting growth industry.

The emerging lithium industry is a living example of how real world economic progress happens – business, unions, researchers and government coming together to deliver on an aspiration bigger than just digging stuff out of the ground and letting the value-adding happen offshore.

Not only is Australia in a position to build the batteries, Brisbane-based company, Tritium, has developed and is already exporting the technology to recharge them. Their charging stations are the fastest in the world, and are fuelling the shift to electric vehicles in Europe.

Our traditional industries are also poised to benefit from a low-carbon future. For example, it takes more than 200 tonnes of metallurgical coal to produce one wind turbine. According to forecasts of global growth in wind power capacity to 2030, Australia could be exporting 15.5 million tonnes of coking coal to build these turbines. This is the equivalent of three years output from the Moranbah North coking coal mine in Queensland.

“ **Labor's vision for Australia will always be one of a country that continues to make things.**

It is expected that the growth in electric vehicles will mean global copper production in the next 25 years will be larger than all the copper mined in world history. Simply put, the road to a low-carbon future can be paved with hundreds of thousands of clean energy jobs, as well as supporting traditional jobs, including coal mining. Labor wants to lead that clean energy revolution.

Labor's vision for Australia will always be one of a country that continues to make things.

I've always been optimistic about our great manufacturing sector.

My optimism was confirmed when I recently visited Keech 3D Advanced Manufacturing in Bendigo. Located in an old foundry, this 21st-century company designs and prints custom-made defence, medical and mining components, employs 140 locals in that regional city and exports to the world.

But it's certainly not our only example. The Bombardier factory in Dandenong has recently been tasked with building new VLocity trains for

regional Victoria and refurbishing existing ones. These additional sets will help secure 100 direct jobs, and will also provide for further jobs in the supply chain. And it's not just good for workers. Those stickers on the side that say "Made in Victoria" are a source of real pride.

In regional Queensland, Downer EDI is fixing up the New Generation Rolling Stock trains with all 75 sets to be repaired at the Maryborough site.

And in WA, the McGowan Government has announced its METRONET railcars will be built locally, bringing rail manufacturing back to the state.

Change can also bring higher safety standards while creating jobs.

At the Dulux plant in Melbourne, workers in lab coats and computers undertake the task of paint development – a risky undertaking that used to be done manually. This change has boosted productivity and produced better jobs. And among those who have jobs at the plant are former Ford workers from Broadmeadows.

Our traditional industries are also embracing technology. For example, our mining services are a major export.

The future manufacturing sector of Australia needs to deliver world class products, incorporate the best technology, and provide the good jobs the sector has provided for generations.

And a high technology manufacturing sector that competes on the basis of quality – not on a race to the bottom on wages – is how we deliver the good manufacturing jobs we need and deserve.

But this too needs leadership, investment, the addressing of challenges – and a vision.

Our manufacturing sector is straining beneath record energy prices, without a plan or leadership from the Government.

I want firms to invest, and that is why the decline in business investment under the Coalition is so concerning. Governments should be encouraging capital investment. Labor has been urging a bring forward of the infrastructure investment that is needed to stimulate the economy.

I have repeatedly called upon the Government to introduce an upgraded investment guarantee as part of a measured economic stimulus package to boost our sluggish economy. Bringing forward infrastructure investment, combined with increased business investment, would create jobs in the short term as well as lift productivity.

Two of our other great renewable resources are imagination and creativity.

“ Governments across the world are recognising the creative industries as a key strategic area for development.”

Our government should be playing more of a leadership role in the development of employment opportunities in the creative sectors.

These industries span creative services such as architecture, design, software, digital content, advertising and marketing as well as cultural production including film, television and radio, music and performing arts, publishing and visual arts.

Governments across the world are recognising the creative industries as a key strategic area for development.

In Australia, these industries are growing at nearly twice the rate of the broader Australian workforce. And because they require creativity and judgment, they support jobs that are much less likely to be automated.

The creative industries are of strategic importance to Australia, but are being held back by cuts, lack of investment and outdated policy settings. So I am pleased that Labor will hold a Creative Economy Summit. Led by Shadow Minister Michelle Rowland, the summit will bring together key players from across the creative industries to chart a course for an expansion.

There are other developments that will have profound effects on countries and their economies. Notably, the future impact of artificial intelligence. Some have estimated that over the next ten years, AI could create nearly \$15 trillion in economic value.

In last year's Budget, the Government announced it was allocating \$30 million over four years to support the development of AI. That's a start, but bear in mind our Singaporean neighbours are devoting around five times that amount.

At this year's election Labor championed the establishment of a National Centre of AI Excellence to help chart the likely national investment required in this area by bringing together those with a stake or an interest in the effect of AI's application in our economy. This Centre needs to be established now.

Think of it this way – my son was born in the Year 2000. For his generation and the next to come, we must respond to the digital revolution with plans to help manage its impact on the future of work and maximise the benefit for communities and our economy.

Achieving growth depends on ensuring that all Australians are able to participate in the workforce. Since the Equal Pay decisions of the 1970s, progress has been made to ensure workplace equality for Australian women.

Yet women in the workplace still suffer gender segregation, pay inequality, sexual harassment and discrimination. To ensure that Australian women thrive in the workforce, we must change the culture of Australian workplaces when it comes to caring responsibilities. We must strive for a labour market where women can be seen on construction or mining sites as equally as men are seen in our places of care. A labour market where the only thing that matters is your skill and ability to do the job.

Ensuring that women can reap the full benefits of participation in the workforce will be a priority for Labor and I will work with unions and employers to achieve this outcome.

Higher productivity and greater economic growth will only be sustainable when everyone can access the job opportunities and the resulting prosperity. A strong economy and an inclusive society go hand in hand.

But even now the unprecedented pace of change and spread of new technologies are leaving many workers unsettled, and others left out of the labour market altogether.

To return confidence to the labour market we need to rebuild the pathways that allow workers to engage with technology and innovation in an assured manner.

This will require the single-minded pursuit of skills. Skilled workers are confident and have more choices. And we know that almost 2 million Australians are unable to find enough work – or any work at all. Yet a recent Australian Industry Group survey indicated that three quarters of businesses cannot find the skilled workers they need.

According to the Government's own agency there are skills shortages in occupations such as pastry chefs, electricians and motor vehicle repairers.

Furthermore, the Australian Resources and Energy Group predicts the mining sector will need an additional 21,000 on-site employees by 2024.

As a result of the rollout of the NDIS and the ageing of our population, the demand for workers in health and human services is set to become even more acute.

In short we have a labour market characterised by the mismatch between what workers have to offer, and what employers need.

Over the past six years, the current Government has issued half a million visas to foreign workers. Instead, we should be – wherever possible – training Australians for current and future jobs.

I recognise this debate is a complex one. But working through the issues is what conscientious governments do.

We must commence a national project to repair our VET system. We see a steep decline in Australians who are working towards an apprenticeship, with 150,000 fewer apprentices and trainees today than when this Government took office.

Under this Government, TAFE and training have suffered huge cuts and gross underinvestment. And state governments have also had an impact. Under the previous WA Liberal government, TAFE fees for some courses went up by as much as 500 per cent. Mark McGowan's Government is committed to TAFE, as demonstrated by its "Lower Fees, Local Skills" policy, which halves TAFE fees for high-priority skills.

Too many young Australians have been burned in recent years by fraudulent training providers – that must never be allowed to happen again.

We also need to ensure that trade qualifications are more relevant to the jobs of today, and to ensure



people have skills that transfer between occupations. Transferability of skills is critical in a world of accelerating change.

Labor in Government will establish a new national partnership to drive improved outcomes in the vocational education and training sector and to strengthen workforce planning, particularly in the growing sectors of our economy.

Jobs and Skills Australia will be a genuine partnership across all sectors – business leaders, both large and small; State and Territory governments; unions; education providers; and those who understand particular regions.

And for the first time, I want this to be a data-driven exercise, working in real time with labour markets technology – such as Seek and LinkedIn – to drive real outcomes.

Like Singapore's Skills Future, I want Jobs and Skills Australia to strengthen our choices in jobs, skills and careers.

It will be legislated, just as Infrastructure Australia was in 2008. Its functions will encompass:

- workforce and skills analysis;
- preparing capacity studies, including for emerging and growing industries;
- undertaking specific plans for targeted groups such as the regions, over-55 workers, and youth; and
- and reviewing the adequacy of the training and vocational system.

But in addition to those functions, it will also have a unique statutory obligation.

Jobs and Skills Australia will undertake workforce forecasting and assessing skills requirements for those services where government is the major funder, and where demand is forecast to expand – including the human services of NDIS, aged care and health.

This specific function will ensure that proper co-ordination occurs across all our human services investments and that the risk to service delivery or cost is reduced.

As Deloitte Access Economics has said, our future workforce will require skills of the heart. And I want to do it with a proven model of collaboration.

It will work with business and unions to harness insights from industry to ensure that training is meeting not just today's needs but to anticipate how work is changing.

It will ensure that the Commonwealth works genuinely with the States and Territories to ensure that our VET system delivers the trainees and apprentices that our country needs.

The TAFE system is the cornerstone of the Australian training system. It can be complemented, but never replaced.

Our model of Jobs and Skills Australia is for a genuine partnership.

The skills challenge of today is more acute than when the Rudd Government developed its skills policy, which is why today's policy goes further.

I see Jobs and Skills Australia as the basis of a new compact.

The Coalition has taken steps in this direction with the proposed establishment of a National Skills Commission. But this is a late and inadequate response from a tired Government now in its seventh year.

This is the same Government that abolished the Australian Workplace and Productivity Agency that Labor established in 2008.

This was an active decision to vacate the field of national leadership – and our workers, and the businesses that need them, have been paying the price.

Co-operation and collaboration work. I know this from my own experience in Government. As Infrastructure Minister, I established Infrastructure Australia. And it worked.

I envisage a similar model for Jobs and Skills Australia. A collaborative model to guide investment in human capital, just as Infrastructure Australia guides investment in physical capital.

Labor will always ensure workers have access to a strong and stable set of minimum conditions, as well as ensuring workers have the right protections.

We need to ensure workers get their fair share of gains in national productivity.

But let me be very clear. Supporting protections is not the same as supporting protectionism. A trading nation such as ours cannot depend on the latter. Protectionism detracts from growth and punishes consumers and businesses.

But protections are different. They are the insurance we take on to reduce uncertainty, strengthen confidence, manage risk and support enterprise.

Labor has always advanced such protections. Protections such as the age pension introduced by Andrew Fisher. The national unemployment benefits scheme introduced by Curtin and Chifley. Universal superannuation and Medicare introduced by Hawke and Keating. The NDIS and paid parental leave introduced by Rudd and Gillard.

There is a common theme here: all of these reforms help protect Australians against uncertainty and the risk of loss – not least in regional Australia, where unemployment rates are higher.

We have established a Regional Jobs Taskforce chaired by Meryl Swanson to focus on employment in our regions.

Right now uncertainty is everywhere. Job insecurity is on the rise – and it doesn't discriminate.

According to the latest research, one in four workers feels unsure about the future of their current job – and half expect it would be difficult to find a new one quickly if they had to.

While many people take on casual or similar styles of work for lifestyle or other reasons, others, compelled by financial necessity, have little choice. Instead they find themselves working unpredictable, fluctuating hours, with few or no protections, and uncertainty about the size of their pay packet.

As a result, many of these workers are unable to plan ahead or make time to be with their families. They may find it impossible to get a car loan or a home loan. Or their lack of job security may leave them too afraid to speak out at work about issues such as health and safety.

These Australians deserve a greater sense of security. One option would be to investigate the barriers to business offering fulltime employment.

This would not only be better for workers. Businesses prosper when they foster stronger, mutually beneficial relationships with their workforces.

Our industrial relations system is being strained by the emergence of new forms of employment arrangements.

One such trend is growth in intermediated or on-demand employment, such as the growth in the gig economy. And non-standard work is seen across industries.

For employers, non-standard arrangements can help with volatility or short term spikes in demand for labour.

But let me be clear, we want people to elect to take on this form of work because it benefits them, not have it imposed on them. And not as a tool to de-unionise workplaces as a step to lowering wages and conditions.

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The Australian people can build a safe, prosperous and secure future if we establish the conditions in which their own efforts are rewarded. One that understands that unions and business have common goals.

For many employees, these arrangements can be beneficial. They can provide flexibility and additional income in the form of a secondary job.

Today we have close to 1.5 million secondary jobs, some with a median income of \$9500 depending on the industry. Forty per cent of Uber drivers, for example have a separate full-time job, or own a business. Many Uber drivers adopt the platform precisely for the flexibility it provides.

It is time to have a conversation about new forms of worker protections, which can be made as flexible as the gig economy jobs they could cover, as well as benefit more traditional industries. Ideas like portable entitlements. Through our Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations, Tony Burke, Labor will lead that conversation.

It is no longer possible for any nation to assume that economic success is inevitable.

But for individuals, the talk of the large levers of national economic policy, the data and the statistics are all made real through the opportunity to work. Through having a job. Through their family and neighbours having a job.

Not just any job – but one that guarantees a decent standard of living, one that continues to improve over time.

But just what those jobs will be a decade from now is uncertain. We can watch the tidal wave of change coming, then be swept away by it. Or we can protect our citizens by giving them a fair shot at a prosperous future.

Labor doesn't believe that Government should simply get out of the way and leave it to the market alone. We know that trickle-down economics only rains down misery on working people.

Government must understand the landscape and the forces that drive change. It must be proactive, not reactive.

The Australian people can build a safe, prosperous and secure future if we establish the conditions in which their own efforts are rewarded. One that understands that unions and business have common goals.

Hawke and Keating laid the foundations for 28 consecutive years of economic growth. Rudd and Gillard saw us through the global financial crisis.

In the coming decades we need to create the conditions to prosper in our changing and dynamic world.

There is absolutely no sign that the Morrison Government even understands this challenge, let alone possesses the will to tackle it.

To put it bluntly they are complacent and have no plan. Labor is prepared to take it on. We know we can do this as long as we work together and present a vision for the future.

Whatever the economic challenges we face, "a fair day's work for a fair day's pay" is still a concept worth aspiring to.

**The future isn't going away.
It's already with us.**



Labor and the Economy.

Vision Statement 2: Address to think tank Per Capita

22 November 2019

Brisbane

I was raised in a council house by a single mother on an invalid pension. So much of what Mum did added up to one thing: her hope that my life would turn out better than hers. What I saw in her was what I would eventually learn was universal.

The aspiration to lift others as we lift ourselves. To make life better for our families and our communities. To create a future you look forward to, by improving the present. And to do everything we can to make sure our children have opportunities and choices greater than what we had.

This is a desire that doesn't distinguish between religion or ethnicity, postcode or bank balance.

For some it is the dream of raising the first generation in their family who goes on from school to higher education. For some it is the dream of making enough money to become their family's first generation to pass on something to the next.

This is also the great possibility that Australia represents to so many migrant families. To them,

Labor's Vision
For Australia
—
Labor and
the Economy

Australia is the promise of a better life. It is a promise with a powerful allure.

It is a promise that drove my Mum. It is a promise I hope she saw realised in me. And it is a promise I hold for my own son.

Labor is imbued with that spirit. One of our defining values is social mobility. Our movement was born at a time when your destiny was anchored to your social class. Labor's historic mission has been to sever that anchor chain.

When I think about the path of my life, I recall that enduring promise of Labor: No one held back and no one left behind.

What turns that aspiration into a reality is a strong economy. An economy that works for people, not the other way around. An economy that has enjoyed 28 consecutive years of growth thanks to the happy accident of our natural endowments, and the anything-but-accidental actions of the Hawke-Keating Labor Government.

And despite the Coalition's declarations that recession was inevitable, the actions of two great Queenslanders — Kevin Rudd and Wayne Swan — ensured that our economy kept moving forward. An economy that is the beginning of possibility, the foundation on which everything else stands. An economy that delivers rising wages and living standards.

But, beneath the dead hand of a Government in its seventh year, the foundations are beginning to crack.

Our economic growth is at its lowest since the global financial crisis, with both the International Monetary Fund and Reserve Bank revising down our growth prospects. Our standard of living is flat-lining. Wages are stagnant. Our unemployment rate is higher than the US, Britain, New Zealand and Germany. Our national debt has doubled. The annual interest bill on that debt alone stands at more than \$16 billion.

Official interest rates are at their lowest in history, with the Reserve Bank even contemplating unconventional monetary policy such as quantitative easing. Productivity is sliding backwards. The accumulation of these economic indicators should be jolting us out of complacency.

We can all take pride in our 28 consecutive years of growth. But we know that past success never guarantees the future.

We should be planning how to address the coming economic challenges.

But anyone hoping to hear about plans from this Government of leaners is set for disappointment. As far as this Government is concerned, the job is already done. Election won, mission complete.

There is nothing left to do but a never-ending victory lap. But as history has shown, whether in sport or commerce, this approach is never sustainable.

Australia cannot afford to rest on its laurels. Labor gets this, even if the Government does not.

I will lay out the economic challenges that Labor will confront, and our priorities. A plan based upon creating wealth as well as ensuring it is distributed fairly. Higher productivity, higher growth, higher wages, fairer outcomes.

That will be Labor's economic agenda.

We face a significant challenge from the structural changes taking place in the global economy.

It has been over a decade since the collapse of Lehmann Brothers and the onset of the global financial crisis. Yet, the impact of the GFC continues to reverberate around the world.

As Thomas Piketty outlined in *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, anyone with assets has done well, but inequality has worsened. While the wealth of the bottom fifth of households hasn't risen from the average of \$35,000 since 2003/4, the wealth of the top fifth has risen from \$1.9 million to \$3.2 million.

A driver of inequality has been the historically low levels of the cost of money. For some countries, such as Germany, a large share of the bonds issued are now at negative rates.

What was described as the Japan problem — low interest rates and low growth — is now much broader across advanced countries.

And with debt now effectively free, Central Banks are handcuffed. They are out of

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ammunition on interest rates yet the Government has relied upon them.

But this is not just an academic exercise. It is reshaping returns in the global economy – particularly for labour and capital. Australia is not immune from these changes.

Low interest rates assist borrowers rather than savers. It is precisely their mission – to bring investment forward.

But this has consequences for asset prices and especially for inequality as the value of assets, for those fortunate enough to hold them, increases.

It also means that when savings are plentiful, and the opportunities of growth less so, firms restructure their balance sheets rather than engage in new investments. And this has implications for wage growth as labour productivity stalls.

Put simply, those with assets have seen their wealth increase, while workers who rely upon their wages have struggled.

The bottom line is that after a decade of low interest rates and low growth, the case for monetary policy as being sufficient is at an end.

Monetary policy is a blunt instrument. It is not designed to do all the heavy lifting on growth and especially not over a decade.

As the Reserve Bank Governor has repeatedly pointed out – we need a wave of reform on our supply side.

I am optimistic about Australia – as long as we get the settings right.

I see a future that builds on our potential as a clean energy superpower. A future that realises our capacity to deliver the cleanest, most ethical food products to the world. A future based on our reserves of rare earths, the resources that will fuel this century the way that coal and iron ore fuelled the last. And a future that leverages our expertise, quality and skills to provide the future services in tourism, education, infrastructure, urban management and human care.

These are the opportunities that lie before us. But they are at risk of not being realised – at risk from a Government that alternates between coasting in neutral, or pulling us backward in what can be most charitably described as acts of passive regression.

They have no plan. No plan for jobs, no plan for growth, no plan for higher wages.

A failure to plan is a plan to fail.

Australians are ambitious for their families, their communities and the nation. It is what characterises our go-ahead spirit. Taking what has been handed down to us and improving on it.

That's why we have one of the highest living standards in the world – our desire to leave the next generation and the nation in a better state than we inherited.

Our task is made that bit easier by the gift geography has given us. At no time in our history has our location in the Indo-Asia Pacific been such an asset. The tyranny of distance is giving way to the privilege of proximity.

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Higher productivity, higher growth, higher wages, fairer outcomes. That will be Labor's economic agenda.

We sit at the apex of a region whose population is set to reach 3.7 billion within a decade – all within a flying time of 10 hours and a convenience of a shared timezone.

The region is seeing the fastest growth in human history. Within that region are countries such as Indonesia and Vietnam, home to the world's fastest rates of economic growth and most rapidly burgeoning middle classes.

We are also connected to India – the world's largest democracy – via its language and institutions, its Australian-based diaspora, and indeed, cricket.

And of course there is China, which, as it enters its next phase of development, is increasingly demanding the sorts of services and consumer experiences that prosperous middle classes desire.

If we are to make the most of our natural endowments and geographical position, Australia has to engage in a productivity renewal project.

Productivity is the key to economic growth, international competitiveness and, ultimately, rising living standards underpinned in large part by long-term, sustainable wage growth. Which is why Australia's recent performance in productivity should be an urgent call to action.

But instead, we have a complacent Government that far from using its power to help drive prosperity and the social mobility it fuels, is instead asleep at the wheel.

When Labor left office in 2013, annual productivity growth averaged 2.2 per cent.

Under the Coalition this rate has halved. In the last two quarters it has actually gone backwards. We are in a productivity recession.

With productivity missing in action, that old anchor chain of class and destiny threatens to make a comeback.

Wages will remain flat and living standards will deteriorate.

For parents trying to put a bit of money away for the annual beach holiday this Christmas, it is getting too hard after paying electricity and childcare bills.

This is a point the Reserve Bank and the business community continue to make.

Our taxation system has shifted towards taxing labour more heavily than capital, reinforcing the concentration of wealth and growing inequality. Not only is this unsustainable, it is contrary to our national spirit.

I want to lift our productivity horizon – and do that in partnership with business, unions and civil society. But I want the productivity

debate to be much more than a one-dimensional focus on industrial relations and work practices.

The fact is workers have not benefited from the modest boost in productivity, because we have an industrial relations system where enterprise bargaining is not delivering real wage improvements.

We have a Government obsessed with attacking the fundamental right of trade unions to exist through measures such as the Ensuring Integrity Bill, which will exacerbate the problem, not solve it.

Instead I want to focus our productivity debate on managing the next wave of challenges. Challenges such as increasing wages. Challenges such as population settlement and the management of our cities and regions so that the balance between our working and family life is restored. Challenges such as climate change, energy and environmental sustainability. Challenges such as support for an ageing population and a health system facing long-term chronic conditions. Challenges such as tackling entrenched, intergenerational poverty – particularly for those 320,000 jobless households with dependent children aged under 15.

The priorities of our productivity renewal project will be to lift investment in infrastructure, lift business investment and invest in our people.

Public infrastructure creates short-term stimulus and jobs, while boosting productivity in the long term.

Our immediate priorities are clear.

One: The confusion and inaction over energy policy must end, replaced with a clear mechanism and plan that will deliver the certainty necessary to drive investment in this sector.

A shift to a clean energy economy will achieve a triple bottom line – more jobs, lower prices, lower emissions.

Climate change is real and it requires leadership.

The early arrival and intensity of the current bushfire crisis should be a wake-up call for anyone who still questions the science.

We can achieve real outcomes while benefiting jobs and the economy.

Two: To support our future prosperity and productivity Australia needs a high speed broadband network built on more 21st century fibre.

A network that revolutionises the delivery of essential services such as health and education, and also unlocks the growth potential of our regions.

Labor went to the previous election with a responsible and credible plan to address near-term concerns with the NBN.

Come 2022, the country will need a long-term plan.

Three: We need to plan now for Australia's future transport needs.

It's no good announcing an urban congestion fund over 18 months ago and literally the only expenditure has been \$17 million on advertising in the lead up to the election.

We need vision such as High Speed Rail, which would bring regional communities closer to our capital cities, and boost the case for regional business investment and decentralisation.

This would be a natural continuation of Labor's strong record in infrastructure.

Indeed, when I was Infrastructure Minister we doubled investment in roads right across our nation. Better roads that cut travelling times and improved safety.

We invested more in urban public transport than all previous governments from Federation through to 2007 combined.

The provision of infrastructure must be a first order public policy priority.

The Government has responded to Labor's campaign by bringing forward some infrastructure investment – but most of it is still after the next election. We need to increase investment now.

There is also a crucial role for the private sector. Indeed, we will partner with the private sector, including our \$2.9 trillion superannuation industry – the legacy of a Labor Government that never sat on its hands – and encourage their investment in infrastructure and technology.

That's why the legislated guarantee to lift super to 12 per cent is not only in the interests of those in the workforce, it is also in our national interest.

Over the past two decades, the average age of Australia's capital stock has remained unchanged, and in some industries such as agriculture, manufacturing and accommodation, it has actually aged.

We are not seeing the level of business investment needed to lift productivity. And this is when interest rates are at historic lows.

Faced with the challenge of weak business confidence, the best the Treasurer can do is hector business leaders. That does not constitute a plan.

I want to see business confidence restored and investment renewed.

I want to see a tax system that gives businesses incentives to invest in themselves – both in better technology and equipment, and in their workers.

In that spirit, I again urge the Government to introduce an upgraded investment guarantee as part of a measured economic stimulus package. Bringing forward infrastructure investment, combined with increased business investment, would create jobs in the short term and lift productivity.

In addition to investing in infrastructure and business physical capital, the key to lifting productivity is investing in people. Crucially, investing in people must involve addressing the skills shortages that are a major handbrake on productivity growth.

We must repair our ailing VET system to tackle the steep decline in the number of Australians working towards apprenticeships.

We need to make sure workers have transferable skills, so they can move more easily between jobs. They also need to be able to upgrade and expand those skills as industries change. Having those skills will give them the confidence to face the future and the change it will bring.

We must foster an education, skills and training system that is fit for purpose.

This is a priority that is so pressing I announced Labor's plans for a new legislated body, Jobs and Skills Australia. It will be a genuine partnership across all sectors – business leaders; governments; unions; education providers; and those with expertise in particular regions.

Labor's productivity renewal project will restart the process of micro-economic reform and the forensic analysis of how economic activity is regulated and where changes have to be made.

I have long been a champion of micro-economic reform. It was the approach I took as Infrastructure Minister when I reduced the number of transport regulators from 23 down to three. Prior to this, separate maritime licences were required across state boundaries.

The same rail signals meant different things depending on where you were. And there were different widths and lengths of heavy vehicles permitted, and even different numbers of cattle allowed on vehicles.

This removed absurd red tape and will return a \$30 billion efficiency dividend to the economy over 20 years.

As the Productivity Commission has confirmed, today's prosperity is due in large part to the micro-economic reform program undertaken by Hawke and Keating.

From liberalising financial markets, removing tariffs and reducing protection, through to competition policy, the micro-economic reform program of Hawke and Keating was unprecedented. What they gave Australia was the national leadership that is an essential ingredient in improving our productivity performance in a globalised, competitive world. Through the sheer power of their actions, they reminded us all that there is a natural and central role for the state.

But we have now reached the limits of the Hawke-Keating reforms. And new challenges require new impetus.

This reform agenda must also be complemented by sound fiscal policy.

I want our economic framework to have a soft heart and a hard head.

As the child of a single mother on the invalid pension, I appreciate the value of a dollar and the importance of managing money. And having grown up in council housing, I also know all too well the value and the big difference government assistance can make to the lives of struggling families.

Prudence and mutual obligation are values I learned growing up and they are values that I will take to fiscal policy.

Like the Hawke-Keating Government, which turned around the budget by 4.8 percentage points of GDP

the equivalent of \$90 billion in today's money
I will ensure that our investment tackles the real challenges we face.

Unlike the Coalition, which continues to float nonsense such as taxpayer subsidies for a new coal-fired power station that it knows full well will not happen, treating the public like mugs.

And unlike the Coalition, which as the Parliamentary Budget Office has demonstrated, is intent on funding its fiscal consolidation through bracket creep to the tune of 0.5 per cent of GDP.

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As the child of a single mother on the invalid pension, I appreciate the value of a dollar and the importance of managing money. And having grown up in council housing, I also know all too well the value and the big difference government assistance can make to the lives of struggling families.

Labor's fiscal approach will instead be aligned to our economic priorities, which will first and foremost be to lift our nation's productivity.

Just as Hawke and Keating used fiscal policy to respond to the terms of trade crisis in the mid-1980s, Rudd and Swan used fiscal policy to quarantine the nation from the shock of the global financial crisis.

I agree with the Secretary of Treasury, who recently told Senate Estimates that medium-term fiscal frameworks play an important role in contributing to a stable and predictable environment supportive of growth.

And I agree with Deloitte Access Economics, when it says that fiscal policy should be assessed in the context of its impact on society's objectives of prosperity and fairness, including intergenerational equity.

Our fiscal priorities will be integrated with our long-term objectives to increase our productivity and, in turn, our living standards and social mobility.

Right now, Australia is full of opportunity. And with the Asian century, we are uniquely poised to maximise our possibilities.

If we fail to get these settings right, the failure will not just be ours. It will be felt by generations to come.

But we can get this right.

Yes, Labor has learned the lessons from our recent mistakes. But importantly, Labor hasn't forgotten the lessons of our historic, nation-changing successes either.

Guided by our record and our enduring values, we look ahead with confidence to the challenges and the opportunities of the economy of the future. Because we are the party that has consistently risen to them.

I want to lead a fiscally responsible Labor Government that invests with an eye firmly fixed on productivity. A Labor Government that supports wealth creation as well as its fair distribution. A Labor Government that supports micro-economic reform.

We will never be content to just drift in the tide of good fortune, but we will do what Labor does best – give Australians a strong and resilient economy from which all else flows.

Australians are pragmatic, but they are not timid.

They will grant a Government a licence to embark on programs of progress and change – provided that Government gets the economy right first. The economy is the starting point.

I talked earlier about how the circumstances of your birth needn't dictate the path of your whole life. That is the social mobility that is at the heart of Labor's mission.

Social mobility is born of opportunity. Opportunity needs a strong economy. A strong economy needs growth in productivity. And growth in productivity needs intelligent budgets and a progressive tax system that incentivises investment in capital and people.

That is economic responsibility. That is how Labor will keep Australians from the old anchor of class and pre-determined destiny.

Now is no time to lower our aspirations – it's time to raise them.



Labor and Democracy.

Vision Statement 3: Address to the Chifley

Research Centre Conference

7 December 2019

Sydney

Labor only wins when we are the party of the future. As you are aware, many of our sister parties overseas have failed to adapt to changing political conditions. They've turned inwards and looked backwards.

We can't make the same mistake. We must look forward and renew.

Labor must always be a progressive Party, of modernisation, of aspiration, of growth, of jobs.

We're the party of social justice, the party of nation building, the party of our natural environment, the party of science and the party of the future.

Our movement was founded at a time when your destiny was anchored to your class. Labor's historic mission has been to sever that anchor chain. No one held back and no one left behind.

Implementing that vision starts with a renewal of Australia's democracy.

Now in its seventh year, the Government has got to the point where it won't support freedom of the press. It won't support the freedom to protest. It won't support freedom of association. And now it won't even support debate in Australia's Parliament.

When we tried to do our job as an Opposition and hold ministers to account for their conduct, the default position of this reactionary government was to shut down debate and gag us – which they did on more than 30 occasions ... in just two weeks.

They pushed their anti-union legislation through the House of Representatives without a single word of debate – not one. This unprecedented action was reminiscent of an authoritarian one party state not a modern democracy.

For the Morrison Government, democracy is an inconvenience.

We will contrast this with plans not just to defend democracy but to enrich it.

Labor will have to formulate our plans for Australia against a backdrop of unparalleled economic, social, geopolitical and environmental change.

We can approach this task in one of two ways.

We can ignore inconvenient truths. Shout cultural insults louder and louder at each other.

Or we can have a proper, grown up, democratic conversation about the best way forward for the country.

Coping with the future is going to require difficult choices.

To succeed, broad interests, concerns and ideas must be heard. We must examine things as they are, rather than as we want them to be. Expert knowledge must be treated with respect.

Let's talk to each other with level heads. With reason, not anger. With respect, not condescension.

And let's take a step back from the social media precipice.

Think before we tweet. Take some heat out of our debates.

Passion is good. Trolling is bad.

In short, we can't start building a better future for Australia without renewing our democracy.

So here are five priorities for strengthening our democracy that will allow us to deal with the challenges of today and build a better tomorrow – together.

First, I want to rebuild our capacity to have constructive national conversations about the big issues.

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Democracy requires more than just the right constitutional and legislative arrangements, in order to work effectively. The starting point is inclusion. Without it, our democratic institutions can become little more than a forum for combat, rather than cooperation.

Democracy requires more than just the right constitutional and legislative arrangements, in order to work effectively.

The starting point is inclusion.

Without it, our democratic institutions can become little more than a forum for combat, rather than cooperation.

It's obvious to everyone that the necessary degree of respect is currently absent... and we were reminded of that this week.

The prime culprit is the culture war. It undermines the potential for rational discussion. The monotonous pattern of culture war arguments is now well established. If you disagree with someone, your facts are fake, your character is questioned, and you're denounced as an elite.

On the other side of the coin, if you're not progressive enough, you're cancelled.

The debate over climate change is the most obvious example. It seems no amount of international scientific consensus or tragic experience, will convince certain members of the Coalition that climate change is a real and present danger.

Australians can now see, smell and feel the changing climate, but our government thinks they're only imagining it.

Coalition members too often see climate change as little more than a conspiracy cooked up by academic scientists to get research grants, and by environmental activists to destroy the free market.

People are subject to attack for putting their views. Even if they're only 16 years old.

I recently heard David Attenborough's right to speak about the destruction of the world's endangered species questioned, because he flies the world to make his documentaries.

Seriously...

Questioning people's motives has now gotten so ridiculous that some of Australia's most experienced firefighters couldn't even get the ear of their own government to warn of the dangers of this year's fire season – just because they accepted the reality of climate change.

Time and again they tried. Time and again they were ignored. Even firefighters are now denounced as cultural elites.

This has got to stop.

In a world that's being revolutionised by science and technology, and threatened by a changing climate, what sort of country treats its scientists, educators and firefighters like enemies of the people?

The answer is: one that will have fewer jobs, a lower standard of living and a more dangerous environment in the decades to come.

On the other side of the argument, I think those of us who advocate change need to understand the viewpoints of those who will feel insecure by that change.

We must consider their point of view, their interests, their security, their future, their solutions.

The convoy into Clermont was not helpful.

We can't afford to let culture wars dominate our politics and our discussions like this.

As Leader of the House in a minority parliament, I saw how it was possible to respect and work with your opponents.

You can hear other people's point of view, without necessarily compromising your own.

I believe the country only advances when people engage with each other in meaningful ways.

The big economic reforms of the 1980s, the gun law reform of the '90s, the NDIS a decade later. These national achievements required leadership, but succeeded because of agreement.

If one of the distinguishing characteristics of being on the left of the political spectrum is a faith in humanity, there is an obligation to engage as broadly as possible.

I do have faith in humanity — not just an abstract humanity, but everyday Australians, including those whose views differ from mine.

And I have faith we can find a better way.

One that lets our democratic processes work as a source of progress. One that allows our democracy to be at its best.

The second thing we can do to get our democracy working as it should, is to break down our echo chambers.

What we need is a little less anger and a little less outrage. We could also do with a little less volume.

The internet has facilitated much greater participation in politics, and can be seen as a democratic force.

Social media means that every news consumer, can also be a news producer.

But because algorithms – aided by artificial intelligence – encourage people to follow sources and publishers that largely reinforce and entrench their existing views, we've seen a much bigger polarisation of political discourse.

The phrase “everyone thinks that” is more and more common.

It's becoming a more prominent feature of political debate today than it was at the turn of this century.

It's like we're characters in the movie *Spinal Tap*, where the amplifier goes all the way up to 11.

But when progressives retreat into our comfort zones, we cede the ground we should be claiming.

Genuine political discourse and problem solving is discouraged. Alternative views are not just dismissed, they're not even considered.

One of the consequences of the increased polarisation of politics is that compromise and searching for outcomes are seen as weakness.

I argue we need to talk with people who disagree with us. Engage. Debate. Advance.

We need to argue our case – every forum, every opportunity – because politics in an echo chamber does nothing to advance a progressive agenda.

If you have confidence in your ideals and policies, there is nothing to fear from debating them.

Sadly, echo chambers aren't just reinforced by algorithms deciding what we see. Sometimes, online platforms are unwilling to filter out content proven to be misinformation. They'll argue that it

doesn't violate their so-called community guidelines. They say that so long as they eventually note the information is fake, the community can judge for itself.

Mark Zuckerberg says he thinks people should be able to see what politicians are saying. But what happens when it turns out that what politicians are saying isn't real at all? Facebook usually won't do anything at all.

That happened to me when men's rights activist Leith Erikson doctored a social media image from my Facebook page. What was originally a graphic supporting Australians' right to protest became a graphic pushing Mr Erikson's campaign against the Family Court.

Now unless you'd seen the original, there is no way that you would know the image was a fake. My words were replaced with Mr Erikson's. The image even included my legal authorisation at the bottom – a clear breach of Australia's electoral laws.

When we raised this directly with Facebook, they just shrugged.

They said it wasn't a breach of the so-called community guidelines.

This is a far-right candidate, creating a fake graphic fraudulently purporting to be from a progressive party, and Facebook sees no issue. Well, I do.

And it begs the question: if this doesn't breach community standards, then what does?

And perhaps more importantly – why do Facebook's laws of the jungle trump Australia's laws of the land?

What then happens when platforms become so complacent with misinformation that they become unable to filter it out?

The artificial intelligence technologies capable of doctoring video so effectively we're unable to distinguish fake from real, are becoming more effective as time goes on.

And we have no reason to assume their growing effectiveness – which takes even A.I. experts by surprise – will slow down.

Take, for example, the fake video of Nancy Pelosi circulated by Trump supporters last year. Millions of views. Hundreds of thousands of shares.

And how many people will see these types of deepfakes – and have their views shaped by them – before we work out that they're fake at all?

This increased volume of anger and misinformation is robbing our political debates of civility and making the public's poor opinion of our political system much, much worse. It's something we simply can't afford.

Surveys are finding that fewer and fewer people are satisfied with the way our democracy works and that some are losing faith in democracy altogether.

The University of Canberra has found that satisfaction with our democracy has more than halved in the last decade, down from 86 percent to 41 percent.

This year the Lowy Institute found that 22 percent of Australians support the statement that "in some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable".

It was a shocking 30 per cent of voters aged 18 to 29 years, whose enrolment and voter turnout is rapidly declining. That's dangerous. When the idealists lose interest in democracy, the cynics win, and positive change stops.

Cynics want us to lose faith in democracy because they know democracy changes things and exposes failure. Cynicism allows failure to go unaddressed.

And that's fine for our opponents, because the conservative side of politics hates change. Their whole ideology is based on maintaining the status quo – and sometimes rolling back reform towards their imagined past.

The third priority is to end government attacks on freedom of the press and the right to protest.

When the Prime Minister says "quiet Australians" what he really wants is silent Australians. That we should all just shut up and listen to him.

He wants Australians to be silent about their future because he knows his policies won't stand up to public scrutiny. Why else would the government threaten people who have the courage to speak up to protect the welfare of their fellow citizens?

Journalists raided by police, with prosecutions not ruled out. Protests labelled secondary boycotts so they can potentially

be outlawed. Union offices raided after the TV cameras have been tipped off, and unions threatened with deregistration.

There's something sinister about these episodes that I know Australians will look back upon in the future with astonishment. You don't govern in the national interest under a shroud of secrecy.

What are they trying to hide?

Actually, we know. Because Royal Commissions are now exposing to public view all the things the government won't.

Poor regulation of our banks — allowing them to ruin people's lives.

Neglected aged care services — exposing our loved ones to shocking abuses.

Violence, abuse and exploitation of people with disability.

Government secrecy affects everyone. Especially the powerless.

Our elderly people's rights are only now being considered because their children exposed their mistreatment to the public.

But the Australian people don't need our government telling us lies to protect us from the truth. We want to know. We have a right to know. And we won't be quiet.

Australians will never be quiet. It's not in our nature. We're up-front. We're bold. We talk about things. We put forward our view. It's the Australian way.

Walk into any pub and you'll hear people giving their two cents worth. You don't see people sitting there, sipping on a beer in silence. Sometimes it's difficult to hear what they have to say, but Australians will tell it to you straight.

And that's the way it should be. Because ignoring problems never makes them go away. It just covers them up and raises the cost of inaction in the long run. Dissenters expose corruption and waste. They spark innovation. They start positive social change.

We don't have to agree with every dissenting voice, but if we don't even let such voices be heard, our society, our economy and our quality of life will stay trapped in a state that will make us poorer and less equal.

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We don't have to agree with every dissenting voice, but if we don't even let such voices be heard, our society, our economy and our quality of life will stay trapped in a state that will make us poorer and less equal.

For that reason, Labor stands with Australia's journalists and the Right to Know Coalition in their united campaign to defend and strengthen press freedom.

Journalism is not a crime. It's essential to preserving our democracy.

We don't need a culture of secrecy. We need a culture of disclosure. Protect whistle-blowers – expand their protections and the public interest test.

Reform freedom of information laws so they can't be flouted by government.

The current delays, obstacles, costs and exemptions make it easier for the government to hide information from the public. That is just not right.

We must bring in stronger protections for public interest journalism. Don't prosecute journalists for just doing their jobs. We need to enshrine in law the changes required to protect press freedom.

Four, we must restore public accountability.

It is vital to Labor's national renewal project that we restore the integrity of government.

The end of last year was an Angus Horribilis for the Government.

First there was the Angus Taylor scandal involving water buybacks.

Then an inquiry which found that Angus Taylor “consciously used his position as an MP and Minister” to try to influence an investigation into the clearing of critically endangered grasslands at a property he and his family part-own.

If that wasn't enough, Angus Taylor has also been involved in the extraordinary fake document concerning the City of Sydney's travel budget.

The Minister has simply refused to come clean about its origins – for months.

I know that when people hear about this sort of behaviour, they often think it has nothing to do with them – something that concerns what the Prime Minister likes to denigrate as “the Canberra bubble”.

But it has everything to do with regular people. Because political abuses like these undermine the capacity of government to make change in the interests of these people. This sort of behaviour has to stop.

That's why, as a major first step to restoring integrity to our democratic system, Labor supports a National Integrity Commission. It should have all the powers, independence and resources of a standing Royal Commission to root out corruption in the federal sphere.

The best antidote to corrupt decision making that puts self-interest before people, is a big dose of Australian sunshine. That's what's coming when the bubble is finally burst.

Confidence in our democratic system would also be supported by other strong public organisations contributing, truthful information and well-informed and reasoned analysis – free from interference and intimidation.

That's why we need to support public bodies like the Bureau of Meteorology, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the CSIRO – and the ABC.

And politicians have a special responsibility.

People elect us to debate each other, not scream at each other.

Over time the executive has assumed greater and greater political power at the expense of the parliament.

If we are to restore the integrity of our democratic system, the pendulum needs to swing back the other way.

Take this simple example: In the House of Representatives, Chairs and Deputy Chairs of parliamentary committees are now selected by the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader respectively – rather than the committees themselves.

Fewer and fewer decisions are being subjected to democratic debate.

The most prominent example of this is the decision to go to war.

I understand there are those who passionately believe that a parliamentary vote should precede the deployment of our troops in conflict overseas. I also understand there is a long tradition of the executive making these decisions alone.

Our parliamentarians should, at the very least, be given the chance to express their view following a cabinet decision to go to war. Like the two days of parliamentary debate Bob Hawke allowed after his cabinet decided to join the first Gulf War.

At their best these debates in Parliament are an exercise in transparency and accountability. And this is a practice that should continue.

Many democratic nations have parliamentary debate and transparency around their deployments. Including in the United Kingdom, where there is now a higher parliamentary threshold for decisions to go to war. And after all, our greatest ally, the United States, has a war powers act.

We can't ask people to put their lives on the line if we as legislators are too afraid to put our arguments on the line.

We also have to ensure that we restore public confidence in the Parliament and we could do that with changes to the way it operates.

Start with simple things: provide the Speaker with standing orders that ensure Ministers must give sensible answers to the questions they're asked.

Examine ways in which proper debate can be facilitated in the parliament, including on matters that are raised by individual members of parliament.

Then, tackle the bigger issues.

These simple changes should be complemented by reforms to restore confidence in the way people get elected.

We need to do more to protect the integrity of our election system to stop high wealth individuals buying power.

Allowing millionaires to buy the result they want is not the same as grassroots activism.

It's not the same as a community organising itself. It's the last betrayal of the democratic ideal. And Australian democracy is not for sale. Ever.

We need to make disclosure of donations happen in real time to provide the Australian people with more transparency. And we need to examine caps on electoral spending to keep everybody's voices equal.

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The most urgent and pressing issue is to create a First Nations voice to parliament, consistent with the historic Uluru Statement from the Heart.

And fifth, I want to modernise our constitution to make it reflect contemporary realities.

But the most urgent and pressing issue is to create a First Nations voice to parliament, consistent with the historic Uluru Statement from the Heart.

If we want to create a better society, we have to listen to Indigenous Australians.

Without their input, we will never close the gaps in living standards and never heal the psychological pain that our history continues to cause.

We will never be truly democratic.

The concept of the voice, indeed the whole Uluru Statement – including their call for the

“ If we want to create a better society, we have to listen to Indigenous Australians.

telling of truth about Australia's history, embodies all the important human and democratic values I've talked about today.

It's about facing up to facts. Telling the truth. Listening to each other. Engaging in reasoned discussion. Showing human decency. Searching for agreement. Making progress.

It contains, in its essence, the vital spirit of democracy.

For nations like us, with our sort of history, it's not just about facing up to the past, it's about searching for a better, more democratic future.

And of course we should have an Australian head of state, which is long-established Labor policy.

Its day is coming – but not before we settle the question of the recognition of the First Australians

The qualities of public decency I've discussed today are the very qualities we are going to need to display if we are to make the voice a reality.

If we think and act as culture warriors, creating the voice simply won't happen.

If we're cynical it won't happen.

But if we think and act more generously, and show some public integrity in representing it to the people, it just might. History is on our side.

It took leadership and agreement to get the parliamentary apology to the stolen generations. Many at the start regarded it as anathema and impossible. But after we debated it thoroughly, it seemed uplifting and inevitable.

In that spirit, Labor starts by acknowledging the government's positive first step in creating a Senior Advisory Group to begin to work through the proposal.

Our policy is clear.

We support the Uluru Statement in its entirety, including a referendum to enshrine a voice in the Constitution, and that is the position we will pursue.

The Government has ruled out constitutional enshrinement from the beginning – and deliberately misrepresented the concept to turn Australians against each other. That's incredibly disappointing.

But the best way to proceed, as in most circumstances, is to keep talking, keep working, keep progressing. That's what we intend to do until a voice that can heal and unify is finally achieved.

Let me end where I began.

If we want to create a better future, we need an open and confident society in which our decisions are guided by facts and everyone's voice can be heard.

We can't afford censorship, persecution, insult or condescension.

Building a better future for our country starts with a full-blooded assault on the culture of fear, censorship and denial that the Morrison Government is trying to foist upon us.

It means an end to the now ingrained habit of shouting people down through the culture wars.

It means all Australians, whether inner city or outer suburb, city or country, young or old, listening harder and really trying to understand where each other is coming from.

And realising that when all's said and done, we're on the same side.



Respecting and Valuing Older Australians.

Vision Statement 4: Address to the Queensland Media Club

19 February 2020

Brisbane

When I look at older Australians, I see the generation that built this nation. The generation that built our economy and shaped our society. The generation that did the hard yards.

They have shown aspiration at its most fundamental. Aspiration not just for themselves, but for a better life for their children. For their grandchildren. Their neighbours. Their community. Their country.

In them I see what I hope we all see – the strength and the spirit of our nation. You see it everywhere you go.

During the terrible bushfire season, I visited many fire zones to see directly what was going on. One was Cudlee Creek in the Adelaide Hills. Among the volunteers with the Country Fire Service there was Mike. He's 82. He has been in the service for 57 years.

He is still making his contribution, still doing administration work for the CFS and, importantly, he is sharing his knowledge with cadets as young as 10. He is still doing his bit for an organisation he loves. And those young people are getting one of the most priceless gifts of all – the wisdom drawn from a long life. What an inspiration.

For so many Australians their later years are an incredible opportunity. Some travel. Some perfect their golf swing. Some throw themselves into community work. Indeed, they are the life blood of our local clubs, associations and fire brigades. Without them civil society would simply grind to a halt.

And so many throw their love and energy into their families, not least their grandchildren.

But having done their bit to build the country into what it is today, they're not going to let it fall apart. Not on their watch.

As with the rest of society, we cannot speak of older Australians as a homogenous group.

Older Australians live in our regions, outer suburbs and inner cities.

After long lives of working and providing for their families and contributing to their nation, older Australians deserve a fulfilling and secure retirement.

If we acknowledge the importance of our older Australians, we need to make sure that their later years are good years.

That's why in government Labor will move quickly to develop and implement a Positive Ageing Strategy. It will outline a plan to help Australians in their final years of paid work, to build the nest egg that will let them retire when and how they want. A plan that makes sure that when Australians do retire, they have access to quality healthcare.

That makes sure our urban environments work for them. That gives all older Australians a roof over their head. That lets them access quality aged care when the need arises.

They are, after all, our grandparents. Our parents. Our brothers and sisters. And eventually, us.

For their part, the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison Government has no strategy, no plan to deal with the challenges and reap the benefits of an ageing population. Current policy settings are simply inadequate.

Australia's lifestyle has long been the envy of the world. But when it comes to supporting our ageing population, we fall far short of our reputation.

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Our Positive Ageing Strategy will above all confront the way we as a society have come to view ageing.

As well as addressing the material needs of older Australians, our Positive Ageing Strategy will above all confront the way we as a society have come to view ageing, a cultural shift away from reverence for our elders that has accelerated under this Government.

The Government talks of the elderly as though they are a burden – an “economic time bomb”, to quote Josh Frydenberg.

When Scott Morrison was Treasurer, he tried cutting the age pension in every Budget – and he succeeded in cutting it for 370,000 Australians in 2015 by changing the assets test.

The failure to take timely action on deeming rates has reduced the income of older Australians.

And this is a Government that is also presiding over an economy characterised by stagnant wages that hit older workers and undermine their retirement incomes.

While it is typical for this Government to have no plan to tackle the big challenges we face as a nation, the demographic trajectory is clear and irreversible. In 1927, 5 per cent of Australia's population was aged over 65. In 2017, it was 15 per cent. By 2057, it is projected to be 22 per cent – more than one in five Australians.

Labor knows there is more we can and should be doing for older Australians. Our older years should be good years.

Just as Australians are living longer, they are staying in the workforce longer. For some this is out of necessity. Others simply love what they do, their job an intrinsic part of their identity.

But it isn't possible for everyone. Older workers in blue collar industries should not be expected to put in even more years of physical slog.

It is also concerning that a growing number of mature-age workers can't get the work that they seek.

Today, over 170,000 Australians aged between 55 and 64 are on unemployment benefits just when they should be building their nest egg.

For too many Australians over the age of 45, if they become unemployed they will struggle to get another job and instead spiral down towards a pretty lean retirement.

The announcement by Holden this week in response to the Government daring them to leave Australia should be viewed in this context.

The answer for some of these Australians is to upgrade their skills, which underscores the urgency of rebuilding our TAFEs and vocational education and training sector.

That's why a future Labor Government will establish Jobs and Skills Australia to drive improved outcomes in this sector.

But having the right skills has not always proven to be enough. Age discrimination persists.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard tackled this by appointing an Age Discrimination Commissioner.

But government cannot legislate the cultural change that is essential. Ageism needs to be called out by each and every one of us.

Employers in particular must play their part. They should value older workers. They should retain them. They should hire them.

According to Deloitte Access Economics, a 3 per cent increase in workforce participation by Australians aged over 55 would generate a \$33 billion boost to the economy each year.

Volunteering is great. But to build a stronger economy, we must harness the talents of everybody – and that includes older Australians who are sources of wisdom and experience for their employers and co-workers.

When the time comes, everyone has a different vision of retirement.

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**Every Australian
should have one thing
in common: they
should have dignity in
that retirement.**

But every Australian should have one thing in common: they should have dignity in that retirement. The crucial ingredient is the retirement income system. On this, Labor's record over more than a century speaks for itself.

In 1908, the Labor Government of Andrew Fisher – a great Queenslander – introduced the old-age pension, ensuring for the first time that working Australians could retire with dignity. We were one of the first nations in the world to do it.

In more recent times, the Rudd Labor Government delivered the most significant boost to the age pension in a generation, lifting a million older Australians out of poverty.

But the system needs improvement. Older Australians should not have to wait months for their pension to be processed. Nor should people be left on hold for hours trying to talk to a human being at Centrelink.

The pension is just one pillar of the retirement income system.

The second pillar was built by the Hawke-Keating Labor Government, which is universal superannuation.

This further extended Australians' financial independence in retirement, extending over time access to the financial security that was once the preserve of business executives and high-ranking public servants.

Our political opponents don't share our aspirations for our fellow Australians.

That's why we established and entrenched superannuation – to empower Australians and bolster their independence.

Superannuation was never designed to be a mere safety net. We established superannuation to give working people a fuller and richer retirement. It is also working for the Australian economy: \$3 trillion worth of superannuation savings is being invested both here and abroad, creating jobs and ensuring Australians get more of the wealth of our great country.

Like Medicare, universal superannuation is a great Labor legacy. Sadly, support for it is not universal.

At the moment we are witnessing an unholy coalition attacking the increase in the Superannuation Guarantee. They want to see super wound back or abolished.

The prescriptions of ACOSS and others play into the hands of the Liberal and National parties – the parties of trickle-down economics, lower wage growth and less security.

Labor supports the legislated increase in the Superannuation Guarantee to 12 per cent by 2025.

With economic growth and productivity you can have both higher super and higher wages.

Having established the universal superannuation system we will not stand by and see it chipped away. We want to make it better.

Women retire with just half the average super of men. Many have none at all. This imbalance must be addressed.

Another key to a good retirement is good health.

The great news is we are living longer. Over the past century we have added two decades and now have an average life expectancy of 82 years.

Our healthcare system must meet the demands of that change. At present, it isn't. Older Australians are facing record costs and waiting times.

Take dental care. Many older Australians are entitled to dental services in the public system. But the Government has cut public dental funding by hundreds of millions of dollars a year – and is set to axe it completely.

As a result, older Australians are forced to wait months or even years for public dental care. Often that means months of pain, stigma and shame.

For many, private dental care simply isn't affordable.

The Government's own data shows that every year more than 200,000 older Australians can't see a dentist because it's too expensive. So it's no surprise that 1 in 2 have gum disease; 1 in 5 have no natural teeth.

That's why Labor went to the last election with a Pensioner Dental Plan. And we hope the Government will follow our lead.

But dental is not the only area where older Australians are struggling to access health care.

Out-of-pocket costs and private health insurance premiums are at record highs. So are waiting times for cataract surgery, hip and knee replacements, and other so-called "elective" surgeries. And with fewer GPs and registered nurses now working within residential aged care facilities, many older Australians struggle to get even basic health services.

We must respond to these existing health care challenges at the same time as planning for the emerging ones.

The silver lining of our longer lives brings with it the cloud of diseases that, in earlier times, we were unlikely to live long enough to experience.

Dementia, for one, now affects nearly half a million Australians directly. It is the second leading cause of death – and the leading cause for women. And of course it sweeps up the families and loved ones of sufferers.

Few things can induce such a sense of helplessness as watching dementia make its remorseless inroads into the mind of a loved one, taking one memory after another.

Our Shadow Assistant Minister for Carers, Emma McBride, came to understand dementia as a granddaughter and daughter caring for her grandmother and father. For six years she helped care for her dad, Grant McBride.

When she was elected to Parliament, she made a promise to her mum Barbara that she would do everything she could to help people living with dementia and their carers. Her mum put it beautifully when she said that in caring for someone with dementia you learn that they are more than their memories.

Unless there is a medical breakthrough, it is expected that in the next 40 years that number will increase to over one million.

But as we wait for that breakthrough, the experience of dementia can be softened.

Emma tells me that one of the best ways to improve the life of someone with dementia, and by extension their family, is to have dementia-friendly spaces in our communities.

It allows those living with dementia to remain connected to family and friends.

It is encouraging that work has begun on Australia's first dementia village – Korongee Dementia Village in Hobart. It will give residents a sense of normality while keeping them safe. They will be able to go shopping, dine at the restaurant, or cook their own dinner.

It's about humanity and dignity.

Ideas like this are what we need to look at if our health care system is to keep pace with demographic change. Growing old challenges us in broader ways.

When we think about how to best support older Australians, we must apply more than a purely financial lens.

Clearly, the physical environment matters. Urban design and housing must help older Australians remain in their homes and in their communities if they choose. It must be adaptable.

Governments must work together on long-term planning to ensure our transport networks, homes, shops and community facilities are accessible and fit for ageing. This includes culturally appropriately facilities and support services.

Smart urban design brings people together, making it easier for people to know their neighbours and strengthen their sense of community.

Older Australians are increasingly experiencing loneliness. As they get older, their children may have moved cities, and their social networks – which are critical to their wellbeing – aren't always there.

For an alternative vision, we can look to Toyama in Japan. It has adopted the principle of a compact city, eliminating the urban sprawl that is such an ingredient in isolation amongst older people.

People live close to each other with good access to services and public transport. They have a more ready sense of community.

I want us to build a society that sees ageing as a positive stage of life.

The ABC program "Old People's Home For 4 Year Olds" made me laugh and made me cry – as it did many of you – but it also made me imagine a future of intergenerational care.

Imagine a future where we co-locate aged care facilities including day respite with kindergartens and preschools?

Day respite for our elderly is a missing piece of the puzzle. For many families, they want mum or dad to stay at home or live with them, but they worry about the long days when they are at work.

Imagine being able to drop your child and grandmother off at the same location. Imagine knowing their day would be enjoyable and safe, with activities led by well-paid staff.

The benefits of intergenerational care are immense. It can help our elderly re-engage with the world, minimise their isolation and the effects of their health issues.

Smart urban design also helps mitigate the worst effects of extreme weather events. Heat waves have a particularly significant impact on older Australians who are more susceptible to heat stress.

I've often quoted Jan Gehl, an architect who highlights the importance of not just buildings themselves, but also the spaces in between.

Incorporating greater vegetation. Making the most of waterways. Considering thermal design. Ensuring shading in public areas. That's what makes our cities cooler and more comfortable and improves mental health.

Our housing must also support an ageing population. Housing must be well designed, adaptable and energy efficient so as to cut the electricity bills that make many older Australians shy away from heating and air-conditioning.

And we also need more affordable social housing. Not least for older women, who are more at risk of homelessness – many for the first time in their lives.

Right now, the fastest growing group of homeless Australians are women aged 65 to 74.

Old age isn't synonymous with aged care. But for some older Australians, it will become necessary in their later years. But our aged care sector is broken.

Look no further than the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, where desperate families and exhausted, under-resourced aged care workers are telling their stories.

The Royal Commission's Interim Report described Australia's aged care system as "cruel and harmful", "shocking" and "all too often, unsafe and seemingly uncaring". They found that "many of the cases of deficiencies or outright failings in aged care were known to ... the regulators ... before coming to public attention."

There have been a quarter of a million instances of substandard aged care reported in the past five years. How could we let this happen?

For too long governments have turned a blind eye. It is a collective failure. There has been a lack of reform and investment in aged care – in both home care and residential aged care.

For those Australians who can and want to stay in their homes, a home care package provides the support they need. There are more than 100,000 Australians on the waiting list for such a package. Older Australians waiting for their high level package are waiting almost three years to get the care that they have been approved for.

In just two years, nearly 30,000 older Australians have died waiting.

The median waiting time for older Australians going into residential aged care has grown by more than 100 days under the Liberals and Nationals – from just over a month to a five-month wait.

At the Royal Commission we heard stories of degradation, suffering, abuse, neglect and systemic failure. We heard that up to half of older Australians in residential aged care are malnourished. People are literally starving. It is shameful that in a wealthy country like ours this is happening.

We heard that the major quality and safety issues are "inadequate prevention and management of wounds, sometimes leading to septicaemia and death" and aged care residents often "sitting or lying in urine or faeces".

Part of the answer to this crisis must lie in our aged care workforce. Those we trust to care for our most vulnerable, our parents, our grandparents, eventually ourselves.

There are too few aged-care workers, and they are paid too little. They have begged the Government to do something.

Labor is listening.

Our aged care workers need proper pay and proper training.

The aged care workforce must also be able to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate care.

Staffing numbers, qualifications, skills mix and experience, all affect the ability of aged care workers to provide safe, quality care.

Under a Labor Government, solving this will be one of the priority tasks for Jobs and Skills Australia.

As I outlined earlier, it will be tasked with strengthening workforce planning, particularly in the growing sectors of our economy like aged care.

At the end of last year, after the shocking Interim Report was handed down, the Government announced its plan to privatise aged care assessments.

Aged Care Minister, Richard Colbeck, even claimed the privatisation was supported by the Royal Commission, a claim that drew a public correction from the Royal Commission chair.

The first interaction the elderly and their families have with the aged care system is through an aged care assessment or ACAT. It is the first step to

Labor's Vision
For Australia

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Respecting and
Valuing Older
Australians

getting a home care package or entering a residential aged care facility.

Our aged care system is broken – and this Government wants to make it worse by subjecting ACAT to the indifference of the market. There is a role for the market. But markets have no conscience.

The Government must abandon its plans immediately. It must act on the Royal Commission recommendations. Our elderly deserve nothing less.

Having grown up in council housing, I have a deep appreciation of the difference governments can make to the lives of Australians.

Having seen what my Mum went through in her later years, I want to be able to make a difference for older Australians now, and the older Australians of the future.

Mum raised me on her own. She was a strong woman with a great mind and a huge heart. She gave so much. But she experienced years of sickness and struggle. She died too young at just 65. If Mum had got the care that she needed earlier, her later years would have been so much better.

I don't want us to all shrug our shoulders and resign ourselves to this simply being the way that it is. That change is all too hard.

We have in our hands the power to make a difference and to seize the opportunities that are before us. The change and the challenges the future holds can be unsettling, but we see the opportunities – as long as we are prepared for them.

This is all part of Labor's vision.

I can't go back in time to fix things for Mum. But, with planning, vision and just some of the spirit that defines our older Australians, we can take care of the future.



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Leadership in a New Climate.

Vision Statement 5: Address to think tank Per Capita

21 February 2020

Melbourne

We're approaching the end of a long and troubled summer, but not the end of the fire season. As we've learned, the two things are no longer synonymous. A new climate – and new change – is here.

This summer is something we hope we never have to go through again—although hope will have little to do with it. Only preparation can help avert further tragedy. And only positive, forward-thinking leadership can steer us through.

After this summer, we've learned a few things as a people. The first is that we're now living in dangerous times. The footage of the Navy evacuating children from burning beaches will not be forgotten.

The second is our volunteer firefighters, our emergency service workers and our defence personnel have reminded us just how remarkable we are as a nation.

The third thing is that we were unprepared. Not because we didn't know what was coming, but because of complacency at the very top.

Thirty-three people have died. More than 3000 homes have been lost. More than a billion animals killed. More than 12 million hectares burnt.

We have to reorganise our defences against fire. With new knowledge, more resources, better leadership and a greater level of national cooperation.

The starting point on what will be a long journey is a change in our political culture. The populism that is overwhelming politics today simply has to end.

People saw during the bushfire emergency just what we can achieve when we show our best selves.

The courageous firefighters put everything on the line, and sometimes tragically paid with their lives. We'll never forget them. Including those who came to our rescue from overseas.

People reached deep into their pockets to donate many millions of dollars to support the relief effort. Corporations, sporting bodies, schools, clubs, and musicians all joined in.

They came to the aid not just of people, but our animals too—showing a warm-heartedness that impressed the world.

Now they're flocking back to the burnt districts as tourists, taking an Empty Esky, spending money to help with the economic recovery.

Our collective response radiated a glow that our country can be proud of. We can't let it disappear.

We have to capture a little of that sunlight and let it shine on our national conversation – and our national leadership – as we look to rebuild and confront the other big issues facing our country.

By the middle of November, the fire situation was starting to fulfil the worst fears of emergency services experts and local communities alike.

At that time, I wrote to the Prime Minister with practical and constructive suggestions based upon proposals and conversations from Government reports, former emergency

service chiefs and frontline volunteers in Queensland and the NSW North Coast.

And we continued to advance constructive suggestions. A call for a national response, coordinated by COAG. A call for more involvement from our Defence Force.

More support for aerial firefighting, based on recommendations from the experts. Financial support for our volunteers. Climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. Mental health support for those affected by the fires. An ecological audit to assess the impact of the fires on native habitat and wildlife.

On all of these measures, it took weeks – and sometimes months – before the government finally acted. The Prime Minister wrote back to my November request saying further action could occur, "should the need arise".

Then day after day, week after week, month after month, the response was: "This is a state issue".

He memorably said, "I don't hold a hose" and firefighters "want to be out there".

When we finally did get more of a national response, a political marketing advertisement was ready to go at the same time.

Authorised by the Liberal Party, showing Defence assets, with a soundtrack more suited to a Hollywood fictional depiction than the real life tragedy unfolding, it even led you to a 'donate' button. Not to donate to the bushfire victims, but inexplicably, to the Liberal Party.

This complacency was there in spite of clear warnings from current and former fire chiefs.

But because those fire-fighters were adamant that climate change was an underlying cause of the coming catastrophe, they were ignored.

Winning the culture war against science was critical. Rejecting ideas because they were put forward by Labor was more important than accepting the practical common sense suggestions we were making.

Everyone knows that this has been a summer of disaster. For the Prime Minister and this government, though, it's been a summer of complacency. It's been one where their arrogance has been on full display before the Australian people.

One in which the Prime Minister refuses to ever admit that he made a mistake. One in which the Prime Minister was once again loose with the truth, twisting facts to suit his own political position.

One in which those who tried to come together in the national interest, were attacked as the government's opponents.

Where this government is offered cooperation, it opts for division.

It continues to exploit every cynical funding mechanism to buy its way back into power. The sports rorts scandal shows it doesn't understand the difference between taxpayers' funds and LNP funds. They see infrastructure as pork-barrelling, where it should be seen as nation-building.

No wonder they're obsessed with integrity when it comes to industrial relations but don't want a bar of a national integrity commission.

The inertia around the bushfire crisis exposed the Government's weakness at its very core. Just as there was no adequate plan to deal with the bushfire crisis, there is no plan for the nation's economy and its softness.

No plan for wages. No plan for social advancement. No plan for the aged care crisis. No plan for climate change. No plan for this nation's future.

When I launched the Weatherill-Emerson review of the last election at the National Press Club in November, I said I wanted to offer the Australian people something better.

A vision which is positive, aspirational and modernising.

I want Labor to play a constructive role in Australia's future. We'll hold the Government to account each and every day – but we'll do it in the national interest, not the interests of partisan politics.

Labor's priority has always been, and always will be, to shape change in the interests of people.

And I want to see a new type of leadership that ends the divisive culture wars and gets us talking honestly and respectfully to each other about the nation's future.

We can avoid the worst excesses of American politics—but only if we really try.

Labor is laying the foundations of our big Renewal Project. We've put the loss of the last election behind us in the rear view mirror, and we're looking forward with new confidence.

Our National Policy Forum has met to begin a thorough policy overhaul.

Our National Platform is being redrafted and renewed to provide a modern expression of

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traditional Labor values.

A date has been set for the next National Conference, at which we will democratically decide our way forward as a social democratic party in the third decade of the 21st Century.

The vision statements I have given have been key indications of our priorities, consistent with the five themes of our policy development.

I've spoken about the need for a strong economy which creates jobs, one that works for people and not the other way around.

We believe in creating wealth as well ensuring its fair distribution – because we know that trickle-down economics only rains misery on working people.

We want to prioritise regional jobs, to benefit those communities and take pressure off the capital cities. That is why I've created a Regional Jobs Taskforce under Meryl Swanson to lead this work.

We believe in investing in our people and our public infrastructure, and we believe in backing the aspirations of the Australian people.

No one held back and no one left behind.

But we know that Australians don't just aspire for themselves. They aspire for their country – and they expect that same determination from their political leaders.

That's why I've spoken about fixing our democracy.

Our vision is of an Australia where First Australians have a Voice that is loud, and strong, and heard – and where journalists can go about their work without fear of police prosecution.

Our Commonwealth might be young. But we should be judged on how we treat those who have spent a lifetime building this nation.

The five themes jobs and growing the economy; fairness and opportunity including education and health; nation building infrastructure; climate change action and enhancing our natural environment; and a strong global voice are guiding our positive agenda for a future Labor Government.

Developing this agenda while holding this Government to account for their actions or lack of action – that is our task each and every day.

History shows that Labor is the party Australians trust in moments of crisis.

And that's why we have to take the lead on defending our country against the dangers of climate change. Not just adaptation, but prevention too. We should listen to science.

Not a radical statement since the enlightenment, but for some a radical declaration when it comes to our changing climate.

The world's scientists have set out what must be done.

To keep the planet safe, we have to achieve less than 2 degrees of global warming – and as close as possible to 1.5 degrees.

To do that, the world must achieve net zero carbon emissions by the year 2050.

In other words, the amount of pollution released into the atmosphere is no greater than the amount we absorb which can occur through agriculture, forestry and other means. Some have called this "carbon neutral".

This is what the world agreed to in Paris – Australia included.

Whether the current government accepts it or not, this goal is fast becoming the reality. All states and territories in Australia have already promised to operate in a carbon neutral way by 2050.

The Business Council of Australia is calling for it. AGL, Santos, BHP, Amcor, BP, Wesfarmers, Telstra and others all agree.

Seventy-three countries, including the UK, Canada, France and Germany, many with conservative governments, have already adopted it as their goal.

Australia should too.

We pride ourselves on always pulling our weight.

And we have seen climate change be a factor in our devastating bushfires. We could see it, smell it, even touch it.

Our amazing continent is particularly vulnerable. So we have a lot to lose. But the good news is we also have a lot to gain.

Action on climate change will mean more jobs, lower emissions and lower energy prices.

As Ross Garnaut says in his most recent book:

"Australia has the strongest interest among developed countries in the success of the global effort on climate change."

Not only will we be among the hardest hit should temperatures get out of control, but he says: "we have the most to gain economically from being part of the global transformation to a zero-emissions economy."

In an important study the CSIRO found last year that net zero emissions by 2050 would result in higher wages, higher growth and lower energy costs.

And in recent months we had some foreshadowing of the costs of inaction. And that's before we see the carbon tariffs and other measures that are being promoted by many of our trading partners.

That's why today I announce that a Labor Government will adopt the carbon neutral target of zero net emissions by the year 2050.

This should be as non-controversial in Australia as it is in most nations.

This will be a real target, with none of the absurd nonsense of so-called “carryover credits” that the Prime Minister has cooked up to give the impression he’s doing something when he isn’t.

That’s not acting. It’s cheating. And Australians aren’t cheaters.

A Labor Government will never use Kyoto carryover credits. Climate change is real and needs a real response.

I’m passionate about this, just as I am about strengthening our economy and creating jobs.

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Action on climate change means more jobs.

It means cheaper and cleaner energy for families and businesses.

People just want to get this done.

The climate wars have seen a decade wasted, when it should have been a decade won.

We should be a clean energy superpower – harnessing the wind and sun to spark a new manufacturing boom. Developing a hydrogen industry. Creating manufacturing jobs here in Australia in new industries that provide well paid jobs.

Instead we have the Government talking nonsense that they themselves have dismissed previously. This includes using taxpayer funds for a proposed new coal fired power station in Collinsville.

Let’s be clear. There is nothing to stop private companies investing their money in projects like this. The reason they aren’t doing that is they don’t stack up.

So they have given the proponents \$4 million of taxpayer funds to see if their project stacks up. No tender process, just here is \$4 million of taxpayer funds.

This is just hush money for the climate sceptics who are stopping any real reform and who stopped the National Energy Guarantee supported by Turnbull, Morrison and Frydenberg.

It’s pathetic. If it made sense the market would provide funding. The climate sceptics are market sceptics as well.

Investors will not contribute because the economic risks are simply too great. The costs are higher and rising. And the cost of alternatives like renewables is lower and falling.

Everyone in the energy sector knows that the only way a new coal-fired power plant will be built in Australia is through significant taxpayer subsidies, including a carbon risk indemnity that the Australian Industry Group estimates would cost up to \$17 billion for a single plant.

That’s why one hasn’t been opened since 2007, construction hasn’t begun on one since 2004 and tenders haven’t been called for one this century.

This Government is scared of the past, but terrified of the future.

Like Keith Pitt – the new Minister for Resources – claiming solar panels and lithium batteries could turn out to be this generation’s asbestos. Let that one sink in for a minute.

Or the Senator Matt Canavan calling renewables the dole bludgers of the energy system.

Or Senator Jim Molan, who recently told the ABC Q&A program, he’s “not relying on evidence”. That says it all.

This government is merely occupying space, without showing any willingness to anticipate the future direction we should be taking.

What I'm saying today is that we need national leadership that will shape our future. One that promotes wealth creation and its fair distribution. One that identifies where future jobs will be and ensures Australians have the skills to fill them. One that identifies opportunities for new industries and business, but at the same time wants every individual to be able to fulfill their potential.

An Australia that builds infrastructure, manufactures quality products and provides services here and overseas.

One that cherishes our natural environment and has a domestic climate change policy that gives us credibility to argue for international action.

An Australia that can stand tall and proud in our increasingly globalised world and that takes advantage of our position in the fastest growing region of the world in human history.

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future.**

An optimistic, creative and aspirational nation to provide the best quality of life for ourselves, our families, our community and our country.

An Australia with leadership as good as our people showed themselves to be during the recent bushfire crisis.

**That is an aspiration worth shaking
hands with.**



Australia Beyond Coronavirus.

Vision Statement 6: Address to Federal

Labor Caucus

11 May 2020

Parliament House, Canberra

You learn a lot about character during a crisis. During the Coronavirus pandemic and the bushfires which preceded it, we have been reminded of the character of Australia.

A nation where the concept of mateship is at its heart, measured by the simple value of looking out for each other.

It is true that being an island continent with a relatively small and sparse population has given us an advantage over many nations in recent months. But our most important advantage and our greatest resource has been our people. As ever, Australians have answered the call.

Our people have responded magnificently and have overwhelmingly engaged in social distancing, not through coercion, but cooperation. Governments at all levels have acted and put aside differences.

And in the lead have been our health professionals, cleaners, teachers, aged care workers, public transport workers, truck drivers, shop assistants,



police and emergency service workers and more, who have risked their own health to look after others.

Our wonderful health system with Medicare at its heart and universality as its spine, has given us confidence to advance through this crisis.

By and large we have avoided the worst of the health consequences, as we have watched mass graves being dug in New York, or the convoys of coffins driven through Italian villages. Yet the damage to the economy has been severe, and the threat of a prolonged impact is very real.

The pandemic has shown that Labor's values of fairness, security and the power of government to change lives were the right values in a crisis. They are also the right values for the recovery.

The Prime Minister's talk of "SnapBack" to what came before, foreshadows a return to the Liberals' traditional agenda. Marketing slogans won't ease the ongoing burden of this pandemic, or hasten recovery.

That's why this 5th Vision Statement is focussed on how Australia emerges from this crisis. What we've learned, what our challenge is now, and how we meet that challenge.

It builds on previous Vision Statements, particularly the Future of Work and the Economy where I advanced support for productivity and the industries of the future, such as clean energy and smart manufacturing.

I spoke about the need for a skills revolution to rebuild TAFE and vocational education.

In my Statement on Valuing Older Australians, I emphasised the contribution they make to our labour market and society.

And in my Democracy statement I spoke of building trust in our institutions.

I have asked each and every member of my team to bring forward ideas that promote a strong and resilient recovery with job creation at its centre.

Policies like a compact on jobs and skills for those who need it, a safety net system that supports people and an infrastructure program that builds the nation.

Labor has taken a constructive approach throughout these testing times. We have supported all the stimulus packages in the Parliament. Where there have been gaps, we have looked for solutions, not arguments.

We have advocated for those who have been left behind, whether they be casuals and labour hire workers, small businesses, visa holders or those in the arts and entertainment sector.

Indeed, the Government has taken up many of our proposals including wage subsidies, better income tests for working families, support for students, Telehealth and mental health provision, support for tenants and increased testing.

We have continued to raise concerns about the structure of the Jobkeeper scheme, including the decision that some people would receive many times more than their ordinary earnings.

Better design could have reduced the economic burden now and the debt burden into the future.

What we have not done is allow the perfect to be the enemy of the good. Our actions contrast with the negativity the Liberals and Nationals employed against the Labor Government during the Global Financial Crisis.

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And – to the best of our ability – we have kept a straight face, while listening to recent converts Scott Morrison and Josh Frydenberg talk about the importance of economic stimulus.

And we have nodded politely when a Government that has ignored climate change, has told us we should follow science and listen to experts.

The fact is it should not have taken another global recession for the Liberals to acknowledge that Labor's approach saved Australia from the last one.

It should not have taken a sudden crunch in global supply chains for the Liberals to appreciate the value of Australian manufacturing.

It should not have taken changing work practices mandated by social distancing, for the Liberals to realise the importance of fast, reliable broadband.

It should not have taken a massive surge in unemployment, for the Liberals to lift Newstart above the poverty line.

It should not have taken a huge disruption to the workforce, for the Liberals to see early childhood education as an essential service.

It should not have taken a pandemic to recognise the important role of the trade union movement and that unions and business share common interests.

It should be the norm that the Australian Government co-operates with States and Territories to take the country forward.

And it should not have required a pandemic for the Government to realise that an economy and society organised on the principle that “we’re all in this together”, is preferable to the law of the jungle and unfettered market forces.

Throughout the crisis, we’ve seen Australians at their best, looking out for each other.

This has been a time of shared sacrifice, for the greater good – fundamentally, to keep our family, friends and neighbours safe.

We’ve been getting through this together.

But it’s been a lot tougher for some than others.

For those still working, and able to work from home, in comfortable circumstances – well, that’s one thing.

It’s quite another for those Australians who have lost loved ones, made more painful when grieving happens in isolation from family and support networks.

It’s been tough for those who have lost their jobs. For those who have put their heart and soul into establishing a small business only to see their dreams shattered. And those who don’t own their homes, or even have a home. For those who’ve been putting themselves at risk to keep others safe and our society functioning. For those who have had to raid their superannuation to stay afloat, or worse, been affected by the fraud that has occurred under the Government’s poorly designed scheme.

Sharing the sacrifice to get through the crisis together has to mean working to secure a recovery in which no one is left behind.

We have to be clear in recognising that those with the least, have suffered the most through this crisis – something that must change.

It’s critical that we are still saying, “we’re all in this together”, after the lockdown has come to an end.

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It’s critical that we are still saying, ‘we’re all in this together’, after the lockdown has come to an end. And not just saying it, but actually living up to that standard, because this experience has reminded us that there is such a thing as society – that we are all connected and the strength of this bond is what is pulling us through as Australians.

And not just saying it, but actually living up to that standard, because this experience has reminded us that there is such a thing as society – that we are all connected and the strength of this bond is what is pulling us through as Australians.

Our challenge must be to recover, stronger. Not just to return to as we were.

Let's not SnapBack to insecure work, to jobseekers stuck in poverty, to scientists being ignored.

We must move forward to having not just survived the pandemic, but having learned from it.

To secure a more resilient society, given just how quickly things can change, through no fault of anyone.

To better recognise the contributions of unsung heroes, like our cleaners, supermarket workers and delivery workers.

To honour our health and aged care workers.

To recognise that young people have done more than their share.

Young people deserve better than an economy and society that consigns them to a lifetime of low wages, job insecurity and unaffordable housing.

We must ensure that what emerges is a society that no longer seems stacked against them, or denies them the opportunity and economic security of older generations.

To our very core, Labor supports the aspiration of every Australian.

My own life story speaks to the power and the opportunity that comes from aspiration, in my case a single mother who wanted a better life for her son than she enjoyed.

This crisis has reminded us that Australians are prepared to aspire not just for themselves, but for their family, for their community and their nation.

This is a once-in-a-political lifetime event, and it creates a once-in-a-century opportunity to renew and revitalise the Federation. A once-in-a-generation chance to reshape our economy so it works for people and deepens the meaning of the fair go.

Curtin and Chifley once spoke of "Victory in War, Victory in Peace".

They knew national leadership in times of crisis was about more than mere

preservation, it was a question of vision, of courage.

The vision to imagine greater opportunity for all in peace, the courage to begin that work even in the midst of war. We must show the same vision and courage now.

We should relish the prospect of looking back with pride at how we saw off this crisis and then emerged stronger.

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This is a once-in-a-political lifetime event, and it creates a once-in-a-century opportunity to renew and revitalise the Federation. A once-in-a-generation chance to reshape our economy so it works for people and deepens the meaning of the fair go.

That strength must be built on delivering more security for those who have work, and jobs and skills for those who don't.

We must build more permanent jobs, an industrial relations system that promotes co-operation, productivity improvements and shared benefits.

The experience of working from home in recent months has given a practical insight into how many businesses could improve their cost structures and productivity by moving to regional cities and towns.

For many, the location and nature of their work will have changed forever, with the potential to increase productivity and decrease urban congestion.

We must revitalise high value Australian manufacturing using our clean energy resources.

With our abundant renewable resources, mining industry and industrial capability, we should be at the forefront of the global competition for jobs and industry.

Lower energy costs will deliver investment in energy intensive manufacturing like steel and aluminium and boost regional jobs and economic activity.

We must invest in nation building infrastructure including iconic projects like High Speed Rail and we should be building trains here. Government procurement policy in rail manufacturing has produced superior outcomes to imports, and created regional jobs in Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia.

The Commonwealth can deliver coordinated procurement across States and Territories and the private sector to smooth out production, lower costs and build skills and capability.

An appropriate decentralisation strategy which boosts regional economic development and takes pressure off our capital cities should be at the heart of national economic development.

We could start by restoring public sector jobs in areas such as Centrelink, Medicare and Veterans Affairs that deliver services to regional communities.

The contracting out of essential public services is not in the national interest and must stop.

It's time to put human beings and human dignity back into human services.

The basics of life such as early childhood education should be nurtured and made affordable.

As someone who grew up in council housing in Camperdown, I know how important having a secure roof over your head is.

Darryl Kerrigan said that his home next to Tullamarine Airport was his castle. Over the last two months our homes have been fortresses. They have helped shield us and protect us.

When the worst of this virus has gone, housing can also help our economy recover.

The pipeline for housing construction is drying up and will result in a sharp decline in work for small business and tradies unless action is taken.

Governments should be working with the private sector and superannuation funds to deliver significant investment in social and affordable housing.

This would help those in need and keep many tradespeople on the tools.

As I mentioned earlier, this crisis has also reminded us how important the people are who work in our supermarkets, who look after our sick, elderly and people with disabilities, who clean our buildings and keep our public transport moving.

People who don't get to work from home. People who have kept us safe. And who don't earn a lot of money.

A housing construction package should include funding to make it easier for essential workers to find affordable rental accommodation closer to work.

A well designed conservation program should also be implemented to boost regional employment targeting weed and pest control, river revitalisation, emissions reduction and bushfire restoration and resilience.

This would be supported by Landcare, agricultural and environmental groups and would provide economic support particularly for those regions devastated by bushfires.

Even before the bushfires and coronavirus pandemic, the economic indicators for Australia were heading in the wrong direction.

The Abbott/Turnbull/Morrison Government had doubled the debt, economic growth was below trend, underemployment rising, wages stagnant, business investment in decline, household debt at record levels and productivity was actually going backwards.

The Reserve Bank responded by repeatedly cutting interest rates to unprecedented lows.

It called for serious infrastructure stimulus, but the Coalition seemed more interested in pork barrelling on an industrial scale exemplified by the Sports Rorts scandal.

It was as if this complacent government, which for the past seven years has been endlessly telling us how well our economy is doing, had absolutely no idea that millions of our people now rely on casual, insecure work to keep their heads above water from week to week.

Perhaps the most astonishing statement came from Christian Porter, who declared that casual workers wouldn't need support during this crisis because of the loading they receive.

From “let them eat cake”, to “let them use their loading”. A minister bringing new meaning to the term, “out of touch”.

The Government has shown contempt for those in the arts and entertainment sector, who do so much to enrich our culture and our quality of life. This is a contribution that should be measured by much more than the sectors \$111 billion economic figure. The same people who donated their time and talent to run benefit concerts for bushfire victims, are being ignored in their time of need.

The fact is that too much of the risk in our economy has been shifted onto those with the least capacity to manage in tougher times.

The broadest burden has been put on the narrowest shoulders.

Our economy has become riskier, and we need to think through what that means for us all.

We need to realise that a good society can't thrive when the balance between risk and security falls out of step.

If some good is to come out of this tragic episode, it's that we must recapture the qualities that, for so long, made our country the envy of the world.

We need to point the country towards growth, because only inclusive economic growth can raise our living standards.

We need to put more emphasis on secure employment – especially for the next generation of younger workers who nowadays have little idea of the meaning of reliable income or holiday pay.

These Australians have been the victims of stagnant wages, shameful examples of wage theft and a government hell-bent on raiding and reducing their superannuation.

Our unions stepped up early to ensure measures were in place to make it possible for essential services to safely operate.

Indeed, the crucial role of unions in our society has been on constant display throughout this pandemic, demanding that the protection of workers' rights – and their very jobs – be at the heart of the economic response.

And maybe, through that, we've realised how much we need to rediscover that great old-fashioned Australian value of egalitarianism.

In an era that worships celebrity, we need to regain our traditional respect for ordinary working people. And do right by them.

We are not just an economy, we are a society.

And one that works best when we look after everyone. Not just some of our people, but all of them.

The pandemic has exposed another inconvenient truth: we are living in uncertain times and maybe our economy isn't as resilient as we like to think.

Together we can build a more resilient Australia. We know the benefits of engagement with the world and the Hawke/Keating reforms which delivered three decades of economic growth.

This pandemic reminds us that national resilience also requires Australian capability to secure critical supply chains in the face of global shocks.

We must continue to trade, taking advantage of our location in the fastest growing region of the world in human history and the growing demand for our mineral resources, food and agricultural products and education services. But we can't “SnapBack” to the Liberals' complacency when it comes to our own capabilities.

This downturn has been triggered by a disease. But it could just as easily have been triggered by a trade war, cyber event, or military stand-off.

The mad scramble for items as simple as personal protective equipment for our front-line medical staff, has demonstrated once and for all, the folly of Tony Abbott and Scott Morrison ravaging Australian industry.

We are now seeing the lasting effects of the death of the Australian car manufacturing industry. The withdrawal of private capital from research and development. The depletion of critical skills. The destruction of the viability of smaller manufacturers further down the supply chain.

To once again become a country that produces high tech manufacturing, we need to embrace science.

Right now Australia is one of the worst countries in the OECD at commercialising

scientific research. We must turn this around, if we are to climb the technological ladder.

We should promote the study of science and celebrate our achievements like the Square Kilometre Array Telescope in Murchison to inspire those looking at future career options.

But instead the Government has slashed funding to the CSIRO, the very organisation now testing vaccines for the coronavirus.

They have slashed funding for the ABC, invaluable during the pandemic, and absolutely pivotal to keeping people safe during the bushfires.

At a time we need muscle, the Government has left us only bone.

This crisis has exposed a complacency about the underlying health of our economy and society that has deepened over the last seven years of Liberal Government.

With one million unemployed it's no time for complacency.

It's no time for a "SnapBack" to the Liberal agenda of cutting services, suppressing wages and undermining job security.

This pandemic has shown that Labor's values of fairness and security and our belief in the power of government to shape change to the advantage of working people are the right ones.

A constrained fiscal position does mean difficult choices. But a reform agenda that doesn't work for all Australians isn't one we should pursue.

We need investment in people, in technology, in infrastructure and in the capacity of government to do good, if we are to be better prepared not just for the next crisis, but for the challenges of the next decade.

We need an economy that works for people, not the other way around.

I said at the beginning that Australians had responded magnificently to this challenge.

Their selflessness and sacrifice deserves more than a "SnapBack" to what we had.

We owe Australians the vision and courage to imagine and create a better future. A future that genuinely lives up to the phrase, "we're all in this together".

Labor will continue to engage in a deep conversation with individuals and organisations over coming months.

Our democracy is more than the 227 people who have the privilege of voting on legislation.

Here in Parliament, Labor has not and will not be obstructionist. We will scrutinise and improve the Government's plans.

We will continue to hold the Government to account on behalf of the people we represent.

The enormity of government expenditure approved in recent months, makes it an imperative. We owe future generations nothing less.

We have a once-in-a-century moment to rethink and renew. To propose and to listen. To continue what works and change what doesn't. To look at the big picture.

Together, we'll chart a way towards a strong economy that works for people. Together, we'll build a path towards a fair society where no one is held back, no one is left behind.

The pandemic has left many feeling alone.

But the recovery will bring us together to pursue the common good like never before.

The present situation is unprecedented. But as we look ahead it is our instincts – shaped by our past experience and underpinned by our enduring values – that will give us our best chance of getting the future right.

I firmly believe that Labor is best placed to learn the lessons of the recent past, and to build a better and fairer future. A future where the benefits of inclusive economic growth are shared, where opportunity is created, where we continue the spirit of looking after each other as we have during the bushfires and the pandemic.

We are, after all, as Ben Lee sang, "all in this together".



Science and the Economic Recovery.

Vision Statement 7: Address to the
National Press Club
24 June 2020
Canberra

One day, when the pandemic is over we might get back into the habit of carrying cash around in our wallets – although cash is likely to be used substantially less than before the pandemic.

Those plastic banknotes are a double boon: they're harder to forge than the old paper ones, and they can survive a washing machine.

This practical bit of genius is an Australian invention, one of many to have emerged out of the CSIRO, that great powerhouse of turning imagination and curiosity into reality.

Fittingly, one of those banknotes bears the face of David Unaipon — preacher, proud Indigenous Australian, inventor and scientific thinker.

He revolutionised sheep-shearing. He foresaw the development of laser. Decades before the first chopper took to the sky, he developed a concept of a helicopter based on the aerodynamics of the boomerang.

If we dedicated all our banknotes to our inventors and our discoverers, there's substantial competition.

Nobel laureate and molecular biologist Elizabeth Blackburn.

2018 Australian of the Year and quantum physicist Michelle Simmons.

Howard Florey, who carried out the first clinical tests of penicillin.

Fiona Wood, who invented spray-on skin and transformed burns treatment.

Graeme Clark, who gave hearing back to so many with the multi-channel cochlear implant.

What unites them all is curiosity, and a vision of a better way of doing things.

Today I want to talk about how that spirit can take us forward.

For years, science has been taking a pounding in that perversity we call the culture wars. A pandemic has snapped us back to reality.

COVID-19 has reunited us with our respect for science. And with that has come an understanding that science is what can take us from lockdown to unlocking our potential.

And as we get better at converting that hunger for knowledge into dollars, science will be the core of our future economic growth, our new industries and

the jobs they will create.

What we have is nothing short of a chance to create a better Australia, and it is powered by science.

Contrary to some commentary, we have a high level of trust in science.

When it comes to agreeing with the claim that science benefits us, a study by Gallup puts Australia among the top five nations.

Australians are resourceful, and famously ingenious. We have a proud record of invention.

To the Australian breakthroughs I have already mentioned, add cervical cancer vaccines; gene shears; the Hendra virus vaccine; the black box flight recorder; Aerogard; wine bottle screw caps.

And yet, paradoxically, we do not celebrate these achievements. We keep adding to its pages, but science is not a story we are good at telling.

In Western Australia, construction will soon begin on a major section of the Square Kilometre Array radio telescope.

Along with its companion section in South Africa, it will let us scan the sky 10,000 times faster than we have ever been able to before.

Each of the two super computers which will process data from the SKA will be among the largest in the world.

The SKA will be used by astrobiologists to search for amino acids by identifying their spectral signatures. Amino acids are the basis of life. Locating these biomarkers will give us our best chance of finding life elsewhere in the universe.

We will not know what that life is or whether it is intelligent. And we will be looking at light that was emitted thousands of years ago. Yet if it happens this will be one of the most profound moments in human history.

And it would happen right here. But ... have you ever heard about it?

We just don't have that culture of excitement about science that you'll find in countries like the US, Germany or China. We need to lift the standard of the national conversation.

Respect for science should be a given, but many scientists are exhausted from being derided by quacks and conspiracists. And some of those are in Parliament.

There is no shortage of politicians who tell us they don't believe in the science of climate change. But science is not an act of faith. Climate change is no more a matter of belief than the coronavirus is. It's about heeding the evidence – and it is overwhelming. We cannot allow opinion to trump truth.

It ranges all the way from Liberal Senator Gerard Rennick, who thinks the Bureau of Meteorology is part of a global conspiracy, to Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack, who viewed discussing the role of climate change in our catastrophic bushfire season as “the ravings of some pure, enlightened and woke capital city greenies”.

Mention the Enlightenment to these people and they reach for the dimmer switch.

It is embarrassing, but not surprising. When it comes to listening to science, this Government has been conveniently ignorant. It would be easy to attribute this to mere incompetence. But that would be wrong. This is no accident.

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In its very first budget in 2014, this Government stripped \$110 million out of scientific funding and hollowed out the CSIRO, one of the bodies we are now counting on for a COVID-19 vaccine.

Funding for our only dedicated bushfire research centre runs out in June and it won't be renewed. For this Government, Back in Black means turning off the lights.

The pandemic has been a wake-up call. The Government has begrudgingly shelved ideology in favour of expertise. We all came together.

The values that are seeing us through this crisis are the values that will let us flourish when it is behind us.

We're not there yet. COVID-19 is still ravaging many countries and the spectre of a second wave keeps us grounded.

Australia has been fortunate. Some of it has been the lottery of geographical isolation and low population density.

But it is also thanks to our high level of scientific and medical expertise – and crucially, the fact that it was listened to and acted on.

It has also been a victory of the Australian people. It is testament to our instincts to pull together and co-operate.

And to respect actual experts rather than the instant experts, who spring up on Facebook like mushrooms and thrive on the same fuel.

As the race to develop a vaccine goes on, earlier scientific achievements have helped life to continue.

Not least is WiFi, which grew partly out of the CSIRO's work in radio astronomy. WiFi has played a major role in flattening the curve.

It let us work from home. It safeguarded our physical and mental health. It helped us to stay connected with each other, even as we were physically separated. It let us shop and access medical services from the safety of home.

The pandemic has accelerated our thinking about how the internet can loosen the binds of habit and improve how we work and live.

Imagine a faster, more reliable NBN.

It would allow us to spread out, taking pressure off big cities, giving regional towns a fresh boost, and improving our quality of life.

The use of smart infrastructure has consistently produced double digit benefit-cost ratios and should be an essential component of new infrastructure.

We can be proud of what we have achieved so far.

Compared with so many other countries, especially where the response has been more political than scientific, we are relatively better off.

We can begin picturing what a post-pandemic Australia can look like.

Labor is doing what we always do: looking to the future with clear eyes, open minds and optimism.

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optimism.**

Consider two Labor leaders, who faced another of our nation's turning points. With the world in conflict around them, John Curtin and Ben Chifley spoke not just of Victory in War but of Victory in Peace.

Curtin didn't live to see the peace, but Chifley worked his guts out for that second victory.

Among his priorities were enlarging the CSIRO and establishing the Australian National University.

As Chifley said: “Scientific research is a necessity for the maintenance of our standard of living and even for our survival.”

The pandemic has brought that truth even more sharply into focus. As we contemplate the road ahead, we must not assume we've had our “pandemic moment”. We've been warned COVID-19 might not even be the “big one” we face in our lifetime.

Now is not the time for complacency. For one thing, should we be the only OECD nation without

the equivalent of a Centre for Disease Control and Prevention?

A properly resourced, independent Australian CDC would ensure a standing focus on pandemic preparedness, such as regular drills and exercises.

The last one was Exercise Sustain in 2008 under the Rudd Government.

A CDC could provide governments with consistent, rapid advice, and coordinate medical research across the public and private sectors, as well as manage the National Medical Stockpile.

We should also consider the health architecture of our region. Perhaps one way of revitalising APEC is to have an APEC CDC providing advice to member economies.

Then there's the World Health Organisation, which has come in for much criticism, some justified. We must ensure criticism of the WHO is constructive and not just the latest volley in the culture wars about “negative globalism”. The WHO should be strengthened and made more transparent and accountable, not sidelined.

After all, it was the WHO that persuaded the Soviet Union and the US to work together – at the height of the Cold War – to eradicate smallpox.

It's this level of ambition that is needed to improve the global response to the pandemic – including on the crucial task of discovering and distributing a vaccine.

Even as we flatten the curve of the coronavirus, the curve of climate change is waiting for us.

Returning to our pre-pandemic approach is not an option.

Consider this Government's rejection of fire experts who were predicting exactly what was coming, and begging to be heard before the recent catastrophic bushfire season.

There was no listening. There was no respect. But there was fire.

Meanwhile, droughts are growing worse and temperature records are being broken in such an unrelenting procession. But we don't have to be passive.

Guided by science, we can fight climate change and create jobs at the same time. We can have a future as a renewable energy superpower, with all the environmental and economic benefits.

Labor's Vision
For Australia
–
Science and the
Economic
Recovery

With our rich lithium reserves we are edging closer to the development of a battery-manufacturing industry.

Brisbane-based company, Tritium, has developed the world's fastest charging stations and is fuelling the shift to electric vehicles in Europe and the USA.

Among the energy opportunities that science is bringing within our reach, Chief Scientist Alan Finkel sees a hydrogen export industry that in ten years could be worth \$1.7 billion.

There are so many opportunities — but as Labor understands instinctively, you can only get the policy settings right when you listen to and respect the science.

That's why we've always supported renewable energy. It's cheap, it's clean and it's the future. Even the Government now admits as much in their Technology Roadmap.

There are elements of the Roadmap such as using domestic nuclear power that Labor remains opposed to. But Labor welcomes the newfound acceptance that renewables and other clean technologies are not only key to addressing climate change, but also key to more investment and more jobs.

But a Technology Roadmap isn't an energy policy. It doesn't tell us how to get there, just where we are going.

We need an energy policy that will support the investment required to deliver on the Technology Roadmap's promise.

Labor knows this. Business knows this. Investors and energy market agencies know this.

Energy policy paralysis and uncertainty has been a major contributor to the decline in business investment. It has resulted in higher costs for business.

Removing this handbrake must be an important part of facilitating the economic recovery that is needed.

When the Morrison Government abandoned the National Energy Guarantee, they turned their back for a time on the prospect of an enduring bipartisan energy policy.

Today, with the importance of scientific advice being front and centre, and a need to invest and create jobs, it's beyond time that Australia had an energy policy in the national interest.

That is why I have written to the Prime Minister and suggested we meet and agree on an energy investment framework that will deliver the modernisation of our energy system.

Like industry and the experts, Labor is open-minded about the specific investment framework to be adopted.

We can work with a National Energy Guarantee, a Clean Energy Target, an Emissions Intensity Scheme or other models which deliver the essential component of providing investment certainty.

It must be flexible, and it must be enduring. An enduring energy policy is one that can adjust to different emission targets.

It should be possible to agree on a policy framework that can deliver confidence to investors even though there is disagreement over Labor's net zero emissions by 2050 target.

Labor is willing to support carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies being able to generate carbon offsets, as long as the usual quality safeguards are met.

We would also support the Government if it reinstates the CCS flagships program established by Labor and abolished by the Abbott Government – or a new funding vehicle.

The Chief Scientist, the IPCC and the IEA all advise that CCS must be part of the solution to reach net zero emissions.

But we won't agree that renewable energy agencies like ARENA and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation should have their funds for renewables raided in order to invest in carbon capture technology.

If we are to advance the Technology Roadmap, then ARENA must be supported with further funding.

When the science is clear politicians should act. Action on climate change that provides investment certainty will create jobs, lower energy costs and reduce emissions.

For Labor, the road ahead has always been clear.

At the Economic Summit that followed the Hawke Government's election, the communique singled out new technology as a key driver of economic growth.

It's a vision that has gone missing in more recent years.

The pandemic has shown up our economy as being short on resilience.

The cautionary tale of Australia's car industry is emblematic. This Government withdrew co-investment funding and dared them to leave – an invitation car-makers took up.

This act of self-harm knocked us down the technological pole and further narrowed an economic base that is now too reliant on services and the export of raw materials.

We are making ourselves vulnerable to a decline in living standards.

And when the next crisis severs global supply lines, we will be exposed.

But this is our chance to start turning things around. The future belongs to those countries that innovate, adapt and adjust.

When it comes to repairing and building that economy, technology and innovation will be key to boosting productivity, growing local manufacturing, and achieving self-reliance.

Encouragingly, some of our home-grown firms are already at the forefront of science and technology.

Biotech firm CSL – a product of the Hawke/Keating micro-economic reforms of the 1980s – is now Australia's largest company by market capitalisation and is working with the University of Queensland to develop a COVID-19 vaccine.

Earlier this month, software giant Atlassian played a major role in the SpaceX rocket launch that took two US astronauts to the International Space Station.

Our resource and agricultural producers are at the helm of the development, design and application of artificial intelligence, drone technologies and genetics.

And our building and construction sector continues to advance with new products, including environmentally sustainable materials

and software that improves design, project management and ultimately, our urban environments.

We must strengthen our capacity to create. We must become serious about high-tech manufacturing.

While the responsibility doesn't rest solely with them, our public institutions including the CSIRO and universities are responsible either directly or indirectly for many of the innovations that we take for granted.

But the Morrison Government plans to cut the Research and Development Tax Incentive which is designed to encourage innovation and growth.

And that innovation – which would bolster industries, create jobs and improve quality of life – can take so many forms, from improving our manufacturing capability to accelerating the evolution of transport from electric vehicles to freight data hubs to intelligent transport systems.

But our R&D investment has fallen below two per cent of GDP – below countries like South Korea, Israel, Sweden, Denmark, and Singapore.

Unless we invest in R&D we will only be able to read the story of our proud manufacturing history, when we should be writing the next chapter.

If only we could persuade the Government that R&D was the name of a sports club in a marginal electorate.

The Reserve Bank Governor says we need to be building bridges across to our recovery. But with these cuts, the Government is burning them.

Our ranking on the Harvard University Economic Complexity Index, which measures the ability to produce unique products, has fallen from 55th in 1995 to 87th in 2017.

The Government needs a comprehensive plan to create a supply of STEM workers, which is undermined by contracting out at the CSIRO and cuts to R&D tax incentives.

The best-practice countries are the ones that drive innovation more directly, focusing their national research efforts into areas of comparative advantage or "national missions".

Labor's Vision
For Australia
–
Science and the
Economic
Recovery

This was the essential point of the Ferris Review into innovation, which was commissioned by Malcolm Turnbull but now lies dormant.

Perhaps the best-known model of how government can leverage research and innovation, comes from the US and its long-standing Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency or DARPA.

DARPA's success is remarkable given its size and budget, having assisted in developing innovations that our modern economy depends on such as the internet, GPS and drone aerial technology.

We also need a more sophisticated manufacturing plan than just responding to crises.

We could do much better at commercialising research, thereby building industries and jobs at home and then selling the product they produce to the world.

Our failure reduces revenue and Intellectual Property, affecting investment, entrepreneurship and technological growth.

Labor has backed calls from the tech sector for the R&D tax incentive refunds to be paid early.

As part of our desire to partner with the private sector, a future Labor Government would encourage the superannuation industry to invest in infrastructure, technology and R&D in a way that is consistent with members' interests. It would pay for all of us well into the future.

This Government is content to come up with road map after road map, but never put any fuel in the car.

Take artificial intelligence. In 2018 alone, AI contributed an estimated \$US2 trillion to the global economy. Within a decade it is forecasted to reach nearly \$US16 trillion. As PWC puts it, this would make it "the biggest commercial opportunity in today's fast changing economy."

In the 2018 Budget, the Government announced it was allocating \$30 million over four years to support the development of AI. Singapore is devoting five times that amount.

At the last election Labor championed the establishment of a National Centre of AI Excellence. It would help chart the likely national investment required in this area by bringing together those with a stake in the effect of AI's application in our economy.

This Centre needs to be established now. We have the talent and the brain power in this country, but not the ability to hang on to it.

In contrast to the UK, which has boosted spending on PhD candidates working on AI, it is not something Australia has prioritised.

The demise starts early. The number of Australian school students studying science has been dwindling for decades, our international results are falling and there are not enough jobs waiting for them at the other end.

Fewer than 10 per cent of Australian university graduates complete an engineering degree, compared to 20 per cent in Germany and Korea. Only 16 per cent of Australians qualified in STEM are women.

Last week's Higher Education announcement will leave more young Australians locked out of university and higher costs for those who gain admission.

The new funding arrangements will actually be a disincentive for universities to enrol STEM students, as Julie Bishop has pointed out.

But I see cause for some optimism. Take the all-girls robotic team from Blacktown Girls High in Michelle Rowland's western Sydney electorate of Greenway.

They're winning prizes and international recognition. Those young women are inspiring. The challenge now is to not lose them to institutions overseas.

In conclusion, Labor understands intrinsically the core role of science in improving lives, strengthening the economy and, ultimately, lifting us up as a nation and making us bigger as a people.

We need facts and expertise. We can't surrender our fate to gut feeling. We don't have to become that cliché of every disaster movie that starts with a politician ignoring a scientist.

The bushfires have reminded us of what happens if we walk away from science. A virus has shown us the path back.

What we see in science are some of the greatest peaks of human endeavour. The hunger to know. To understand. To advance. And within those we see the sources of new industries, new jobs, a new economy, a new resilience.

To brighten the future, we need only look to the core ingredients we've relied on before. Imagination. Curiosity. Respect. And investment.

Investing in science is investing in our future. Australia can have a better future. Let's create it together



Driving Growth in Regional Australia.

Vision Statement 8: Address to community leaders

9 September 2020

Coffs Harbour

As the Minister for Regional Development, and as Minister for Infrastructure and Local Government, I had a real opportunity to make a difference working with regional communities during the Global Financial Crisis. I didn't miss that opportunity.

Creating good jobs in regional towns and cities was the key to maintaining economic growth and capitalising on the strengths that our different regions and communities offered across our vast land.

Establishing Regional Development Australia and working closely with Local Government ensured that priorities came from these communities, not to them.

It also gave me the opportunity to visit these communities, develop relationships and learn first hand what made them tick.

I've followed the Wide Open Road across this continent from the Cattle and Cane country of the north, to great iron ore mines in the West, the resources heartland of central Queensland and the food producing powerhouses of the Murray Darling Basin.

I've talked to farmers on their properties growing everything from mangoes to macadamias, wheat and wool to wine grapes, beef and barley to bananas, sheep to salmon.

I've walked factory floors of world-class train manufacturing facilities in Maryborough.

I've seen visionary clean energy projects around Hughenden created by companies seizing new opportunities in a changing world.

I've marvelled at the enormous scale of our resources sector producing wealth for our regional towns and our nation.

I've witnessed the creativity and energy of our tourism operators. They're always looking for new markets, and they always stay hungry – even now, as they face their biggest tests recovering from bushfires and battling the coronavirus pandemic.

Our regions are populated by talented, ambitious Australians who work hard and work smart. The way they contribute to our economy and our national life is extraordinary.

They endure – even as they fight crippling droughts, floods, cyclones and unprecedented bushfires.

They endure – even as they deal with the fallout from fluctuating commodity prices.

Around two thirds of Australia's export earnings come from regional industries including resources, agriculture, tourism, education and manufacturing. But too often regional communities have seen good jobs, wealth and opportunity flow back into the capital cities.

There is so much potential for so much more growth.

There's potential for growth in our existing industries. And there's massive potential for growth in underdone areas like clean energy and advanced manufacturing.

Regional Australia needs a government with the vision to back it in.

And regional Australians need a vision to back you – one that's ready to invest in your future prosperity, and ready to unlock it.

The Morrison Government falls far short of what regional Australia needs and deserves.

The Morrison Government pays lip service to the potential of our regions.

It's led by a Prime Minister who, in his eighth year in office, has no jobs plan for regional Australia.

He's always there for the photo-op, but never there for the follow up.

Take the \$5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility that, at its current rate, will take around 150 years to spend.

And last week in Parliament they confirmed that not one dollar of the \$200 million that was allocated for bushfire recovery and mitigation last financial year had been spent. Put simply, Scott Morrison is all talk, and no walk.

And the National Party, once the proud party of the farmer, is now nothing more than a shallow enabler for Morrison's govern-by-marketing method.

No one talks up regional Australia like the Nats. But no-one lets down regional Australia like them, either.

I offer a snapshot of how a Labor Government would harness the untapped potential of regional Australia.

It's about investing in regions to pave a real path for jobs growth, economic activity and diversification. It's about investing in infrastructure.

It's about investing in our nation's greatest asset – our people, through proper support for regional

“ I offer a snapshot of how a Labor Government would harness the untapped potential of regional Australia.”

universities, TAFE colleges, schools and early childhood education.

Above all, it's about collaboration. Working hand in hand with local government, businesses and communities. Helping individual regions identify, develop and mobilise their competitive advantages.

In the 21st century, the Government should understand that regional Australia is not just a hinterland to the coastal cities.

It's not a monolith that stands still behind some abstract metropolitan boundary. It's a diverse, dynamic set of communities – each with their own character, each with their own challenges. And it has the potential to drive huge economic growth in the coming decades.

But only if we have a government with a properly thought-out and fully formed decentralisation and economic development agenda for the regions.

Turbo-charging regional growth has to be at the heart of that agenda. Serious diversification has to be at the heart of that agenda. And only a Labor Government will deliver that agenda.

For most of this year, the globe has been hammered by the coronavirus pandemic and everything it has brought with it.

In this country, the pandemic has tragically claimed hundreds of lives and hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Our nation is in the Morrison Recession.

Nearly 30 years of continuous economic growth – the legacy of the reforms of the great Hawke and Keating Labor Governments – have come to an end.

But living through the struggle of coronavirus has taught us some valuable lessons.

We have learned that many Australians can be just as productive working from their homes as they are in large offices in central business districts.

Businesses have glimpsed the potential to reduce their overheads with more remote work.

The pandemic has also opened the eyes of Australians and businesses to the possible benefits of relocating to the regions.

For some, lower overheads makes sense. For many, there's the attraction of shorter commuting times, lower property prices and a less frenetic lifestyle.

Coronavirus has accelerated the change of an old mindset, breaking the bonds that tied so many of us to our capital cities.

But this change was already underway. Even before the pandemic, we saw a growing number of jobs going digital or online – not least the increasing opportunities being thrown up by the creative economy and through the NBN.

The pandemic has pointed the way to the possibilities of decentralisation – or better yet, smart regionalisation.

It makes sense for governments to nurture smart regionalisation.

It won't just happen by moving a couple of government agencies from Australia's largest inland city – the Bush Capital – into regional communities. That's the Barnaby Joyce fantasy model. And it failed.

Decentralisation requires genuine investment, serious policy making, proper consultation and determined implementation. That's where Labor governments always shine.

In 1946, in charting the recovery from the Second World War, Ben Chifley highlighted decentralisation as a pathway for the 'balanced economic and defensive development of industry'.

Gough Whitlam and one of my mentors, Tom Uren, knew that investing in our regions would help tackle the entrenched social and economic inequality that existed in our nation at the beginning of the 1970s.

The Hawke and Keating years brought about a revolution in agriculture policy, removing the subsidies and protections in agriculture that had been holding back the sector.

And the previous Rudd and Gillard governments, in which I was proud to serve as the nation's first Federal Infrastructure Minister, doubled the roads budget and increased investment in rail tenfold, directing two thirds of that investment towards the regions.

We understood that regions can't grow without supportive infrastructure. The right type of infrastructure.

That's why we upgraded critical regional roads including the Bruce, Pacific, Hume, Dukes, Princes, Great Northern and Midland highways.

In regional NSW, the duplication of the Pacific Highway will cut the travel time from Hexham to the Queensland border by two and a half hours. As Infrastructure Minister I increased investment in the Pacific Highway from \$1.3 billion over 12 years of the Howard Government to \$7.6 billion in half that time of the Rudd and Gillard Governments.

Most importantly, in the years since the upgrade commenced, road fatalities have halved.

The upgrade of the Highway included delivery of the long talked about Kempsey Bypass, which boasts the longest bridge in Australia. This is a project that was announced, funded, built and opened during my time as Infrastructure Minister.

In contrast, the residents of nearby Coffs Harbour are still waiting for their bypass. Indeed, it has now been seven years since Tony Abbott first promised that the Coalition would deliver the project – and still not a hole has been dug.

Another lesson from coronavirus is the folly of the current Government's rejection of fibre-to-the-premises broadband.

This 21st Century technology is what I turned on in Coffs Harbour as Communications Minister in 2013.

If we want people to work from home, we need the very best broadband network available. But the job is only half done.

It's hard to move into the future when the Government has tied us to the past with copper wire. Their sentimental attachment to 19th century technology is surely one of the most costly exercises in nostalgia this nation has ever seen.

Too many businesses in regional Australia continue

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World-class communications technology can literally banish the tyranny of distance as a handbrake on growth in regional and rural areas. But we've got a Government that's leaving people waiting, and leaving people behind.

to be held back by broadband which just isn't fast enough, reliable enough or good enough.

World-class communications technology can literally banish the tyranny of distance as a handbrake on growth in regional and rural areas. But we've got a Government that's leaving people waiting, and leaving people behind.

I'm not the first person to say we need better transport links between capital cities and regional centres. I know it's certainly not the first time anyone in this room has heard it – or thought it.

But we just aren't moving fast enough.

For years now, I've advocated the construction of a High Speed Rail Link between Brisbane and Melbourne via Sydney and Canberra.

Travelling at speeds of more than 300km an hour, High Speed Rail would see people move between capital cities in as little as three hours.

You could go from Sydney to Canberra or Sydney to Newcastle in under one hour.

It would put Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie under 2 hours from Sydney or Brisbane.

High Speed Rail opens up the possibility of people commuting to capital cities while enjoying the lower cost and lifestyle benefits of regional living.

It would encourage businesses to move or establish themselves in regions.

It would also be an economic game changer for communities on its path with proposed stops at the Gold Coast, Casino, Grafton, Port Macquarie, Taree, Newcastle, the Central Coast, the Southern Highlands, Canberra, Wagga Wagga, Albury-Wodonga and Shepparton.

Put simply, it would revolutionise interstate travel. It would revolutionise regional economies.

Likewise, the long promised Inland Rail Link – a freight rail link connecting Brisbane and Melbourne – would make it easier for agricultural producers to get their exports on to ships.

The problem is that on the Government's current plans, the line will stop 38 kilometres from the Port of Brisbane. That makes no sense. We need to get the route right and realise the full potential of this important project.

Roads. Railways. Communications. These are bridges to regional prosperity. Swifter movement of goods and services around our nation boosts productivity. Greater productivity means more jobs. It's that simple.

At the end of the day, everything we do as legislators needs to come back to people. Their quality of life, their productivity, their prosperity.

Productivity and prosperity depend upon skills and training.

For the past seven years, this Government has cut funding to schools, run down our universities and pulled \$3 billion out of the TAFE sector.

You would struggle to find a greater indictment of Scott Morrison than this fact: today there are 140,000 fewer Australians undertaking apprenticeships or traineeships than in 2013.

That includes 1,300 fewer apprenticeships and traineeships right here in the Coffs Harbour region. A drop of 44 per cent. It's a disgrace.

This Government has also waged war on universities, particularly regional universities. Recently the University of New England announced plans to cut up to 210 jobs from its workforce of 1,400.

We've seen almost 300 jobs lost at Central Queensland University. This is despite the fact regional universities provide employment opportunities and social and economic benefits, including retaining young people and graduates in the region.

They also undertake research that benefits the entire nation, including here in Coffs Harbour at Southern Cross University which is home to the National Marine Science Centre.

The effect of all this neglect will be magnified in years to come as we emerge from the Morrison Recession sparked by the coronavirus pandemic.

A million Australians are already unemployed. A further 1.5 million Australians are underemployed. And another 400,000 will join them on Centrelink queues by Christmas as the Government scales back the level of JobKeeper and JobSeeker.

Currently there are 28 Australians in regional areas relying on unemployment payments for every vacancy.

This shows just how much more potential our regions have to offer – people ready and wanting to seize opportunity and work to grow regional economies.

We entered the Morrison Recession with a labour market characterised by insecure work. And the pandemic has demonstrated just how bad a problem this is for the nation.

Casual, labour hire and gig workers are unable to isolate for fear of losing hours or their job – making the public health crisis worse.

Young workers hit hard by job losses and forced to use their own superannuation to get by.

Secure work provides the lynchpin for a region – because it provides workers with the confidence and strength to put down roots in a community and spend locally.

Yet we know that this Government has no plan for secure work. And it has no plan for training either.

For regional Australia to boom its people need the technical skills and professional knowledge to do the jobs of the future. - It will protect the jobs of the present and prepare regional Australians for the jobs of the future.

People in the regions often can't access the services they need.

Take health. We know that people in regional Australia suffer higher rates of illness – particularly from chronic diseases like asthma, arthritis and diabetes.

And tragically, we also know that life expectancy falls the further you go from our capital cities. On average, people in the regions live several years less, and the life expectancy gap in remote areas is up to 15 years.

That's not acceptable to me, and it's not acceptable to Labor. So we need to look closely at its causes.

Partly it's because it's harder to access health services in regional Australia. There are about half as many specialists as in cities, for example.



For regional Australia to boom its people need the technical skills and professional knowledge to do the jobs of the future. It will protect the jobs of the present and prepare regional Australians for the jobs of the future.

Yet the Government is cutting bulk billing incentives in some regions, and making it harder to recruit doctors in others.

But health outcomes are also shaped by the social and economic factors that help keep people well – or make them sick – in the first place.

Much of the health disadvantage that we see in regions can be traced to lower rates of education, higher rates of unemployment, and lower incomes for those who do have jobs.

Addressing those issues would also help people in the regions to live longer, healthier lives.

But it is not just health care. The regions miss out when it comes to aged care too.

Senior Counsel Assisting the Aged Care Royal Commission Peter Gray QC noted the availability of aged care in regional and remote Australia “...compares poorly to its availability in urban Australia.”

Aged care services are so important in regional, rural and remote areas. Not only because of the need in the regions, but because aged care facilities and services are often at the heart of the community. The residents are part of the community. The incredible staff are part of the community.

But many regional aged care services struggle to be viable, and they struggle to attract staff.

Fewer residential aged care places, fewer community aged care services, fewer dementia facilities, more hospital visits for people waiting for residential aged care, and more people

waiting longer for home care packages in our regions.

On the Mid North Coast of NSW, there are more than 2500 people still waiting for a home care package that has already been approved.

And the coronavirus has not spared regional aged care facilities.

But this Government had no plan for the coronavirus and the aged care sector.

Older people in our regions must be able to access high quality aged care services. As Peter Gray QC told the Royal Commission:

“...equity of access to quality aged care for Australians who live outside the big cities is a matter of simple fairness.”

Older Australians in regional Australia need a Government which recognises this and values them enough to invest in services for them.

One thing I know about regional Australians is that they stick together. They understand the value of collaboration to advance their common interests.

Governments must engage with industry, businesses, chambers of commerce and local governments to maximise the opportunities for growth across our regions.

When Labor was last in office we created Regional Development Australia to drive this engagement. Critically, we encouraged individual regions to play to their strengths – to identify their competitive advantages.

Collaboration works. After the Global Financial Crisis hit in 2009 the former Labor Government appointed Lindsay Fox and Bill Kelty to work with the local communities that had been hit the hardest.

In communities like Cairns, Mr Fox and Mr Kelty brought together local mayors, business leaders and community leaders to develop local plans to get people back to work.

The same thing happened in Coffs Harbour. Because of this strategy, unemployment in Coffs Harbour dropped.

Clearly the process worked – until it was abandoned by the Abbott Government.

For decades the resources sector has been the backbone of the Australian economy.

In the 21st century, as the world moves to a lower-carbon future, our exports will continue to meet the demands of the rapidly growing nations of our region.

But, as I have said before, our nation's long-term future lies in renewable energy.

For example, our vast resources of lithium and other rare earths offer huge potential in a world that will become increasingly focused on the need for batteries to store energy.

In coming decades, we must position our nation to be a major player in the clean energy industries that continue to grow in importance over time.

Indeed, if we get the policies right, we can transform our nation into a renewable energy superpower.

There are also opportunities in bio-energy, where bio-mass generation and waste-to-energy continues to evolve.

Similarly, renewable hydrogen is a future potential export sector.

This week's report from the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer envisages 17,000 jobs and \$26 billion added to annual GDP from a domestic hydrogen industry which has been backed in by NSW Environment Minister Matt Kean.

The Morrison Government appears to be blind to such opportunities. Our Prime Minister has no energy policy.

He is impotent in the face of a rump of conservative hard liners so stridently opposed to action on climate change that they ignore the opportunities it offers their own communities. They ignore the jobs on offer — and the community is losing patience.

Consider this: The Nationals, who say they represent farmers, are now at odds with the National Farmers' Federation, which recently embraced the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

This target has also been embraced by Business Council of Australia, Minerals Council of Australia, Santos, BHP and a host of other resource companies.

While the Government demonises solar energy, elsewhere the debate is moving on.

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It will take a Labor Government to tackle energy policy in a way that recognises the value of the current resources market while seeking out the massive opportunities in renewables. The right plans will create hundreds of thousands of jobs in new industries, including in regional Australia while also reducing power prices.

When it comes to energy and resources policy, the community and the investment sector is moving beyond this do-nothing Government.

It will take a Labor Government to tackle energy policy in a way that recognises the value of the current resources market while seeking out the massive opportunities in renewables. The right plans will create hundreds of thousands of jobs in new industries, including in regional Australia while also reducing power prices.

We should also be attracting greater investment in heavy manufacturing in regional Australia. There's huge potential for it. But under this Government, the sector is going backwards.

The same people who dared car manufacturers to close their Australian operations have presided over a 14 per cent reduction in regional manufacturing jobs. We can do much better.

Take rail for example. Over the next 20 years, Australian states will invest billions of dollars in new trains and new lines for them to run on.

Between Perth's METRONET, Brisbane's Cross River Rail and major projects in Sydney and Melbourne, we'll need hundreds of rail carriages in the next few decades. And we should build them here. That way, we'll create jobs in regional Australia while boosting our manufacturing skills base.

Last month, I was shocked to hear NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian declare:

“Australia and NSW are not good at building trains, that’s why we have to purchase them.” Just stunning. And it’s not right.

Try saying that to the 250 workers and 30 apprentices at the Downer EDI factory in Maryborough. They’ve been building trains there for 150 years. When I visited late last year, the workers told me they were proud of their work and proud of their facility.

One of their current jobs is to retrofit new trains purchased from overseas by the previous Coalition Queensland Government which were not fit for purpose.

Australians are great at building trains. The Tangara trains built in Newcastle have been the backbone of the Sydney rail network for decades.

With demand for new rolling stock about to skyrocket, we need a national rail plan.

We need to use the power of government purchasing to help revive and grow manufacturing in this nation.

The NSW Premier and her Liberal colleagues in other states are blind to this golden opportunity to create good, secure jobs and broaden our skills base.

Instead they bought trains from Korea and India which don’t fit through some of the Sydney network’s tunnels, ferries from Indonesia and China – some of which apparently don’t fit under Sydney bridges, trams from Spain, and buses from Malaysia, when all of this could have been delivered on time and on budget in regional Australia.

This lack of confidence in the capacity of regional business has brought Australia one step closer to the end of the line for Australian manufacturing. It is the reason why businesses like United Group just down the road from here in Taree, which used to employ hundreds of tradespeople and trained hundreds of apprentices, is mothballed and empty today.

To identify and bolster future manufacturing opportunities, it’s time we invested properly in research and development.

Australia has a culture of innovation and adaptation. We invented Wi-Fi, black box flight recorders, plastic bank notes and cochlear implants. The list goes on.

Governments must back this culture of innovation by investing in research and development. It must play a critical role in identifying efficiencies in traditional sectors like agriculture and manufacturing while developing and

cultivating new ones. This is no time to allow our universities, particularly our regional universities to shed staff and research capability.

Supporting R&D is a matter of urgency, but the Morrison Government plans to go the other way and cut the Research and Development Tax Incentive designed to encourage growth.

Unless we invest in R&D, we will only be able to read the story of our proud manufacturing history when we should be writing the next chapter.

In July last year, I attended a Bush Summit in Dubbo run by the Daily Telegraph to bring attention to challenges facing rural and regional communities.

At that event Scott Morrison announced he would ask his Agriculture Minister to draw up a national plan to enable agriculture, fisheries and forestry to become a \$100 billion industry by 2030.

The cameras flashed. The story ran on television news. More than a year later, we’ve heard nothing about this national plan. Not a thing.

Always there for the photo-op. Never there for the follow-up. At the very time regional communities need support, the Morrison Government is leaving you behind.

Our regions are our key to emerging more strongly from this crisis in better shape than we went into it, with no one held back and no one left behind.

In all their diversity and all their possibility, they are our natural advantage. They are our potential as a society, as an economy, and as a nation.

Just as technology has evolved to the point where it can let us spread out, the pandemic has accelerated the evolution of our mindsets and let us realise we can.

We have a chance to create a nation that is more resilient and self-reliant.

Let’s match it with an abundance of imagination and willpower. Let’s imagine a better future for regional Australia, a future that embraces progress, innovation, diversification and growth. An Albanese Labor Government will roll up our sleeves and do just that.



Budget in Reply.

8 October 2020

House of Representatives

Parliament House, Canberra

We live in a great country.

Amidst all the chaos and hardship that has shaken our world in 2020 – there is nowhere else you'd rather be.

The credit for that, as always, doesn't belong to the politicians. It belongs to the people of Australia.

We are coming through this pandemic because of your hard work, your sacrifices, your sense of community.

Your willingness to put not just your friends and neighbours, but people you have not met and probably will never meet, ahead of yourself.

Your values. Australian values.

That we look after each other.

And it's that spirit, those values, which should define what happens next.

Because the challenge – and the opportunity – facing us now is not just a matter of getting things back to the way they were.

We have to aim higher than that, strive for more than that.

We have a once-in-a-generation chance to rebuild our economy and our country for the better.

To launch a recovery that delivers a stronger, fairer and more secure future, for all Australians.

This Budget fails the test.

The Budget reflects the Government's character of being guided by short term politics, not long term vision.

Our economy was already struggling coming into the crisis. Slow growth, flat wages, declining productivity, business investment going backwards, a doubling of debt.

Now they are cutting wage subsidies, slashing unemployment benefits back and have no plan for childcare, aged care or social housing.

This Budget leaves people behind.

Women have suffered most during the pandemic, but are reduced to a footnote. The best the Government can offer is they can drive on a road.

And if you are over 35 you have certainly been left behind.

This week your wage subsidy was cut. In March your wage subsidy disappears.

If you're then unemployed you get \$40 a day and forced into poverty.

Then you will compete to get a job with people who will have their wages subsidised.

A quadruple whammy.

The Morrison recession will be deeper and longer because of this Budget.

I was brought up to look on the bright side.

My mother Maryanne, was a great optimist.

She was crippled with rheumatoid arthritis and other health conditions, which meant constant pain and long stints in hospital.

A single mum who raised me in public housing and relied on a disability pension, she did it tough.

But she always had a smile on her face, she never complained about her lot in life.

Like every Australian parent, her greatest aspiration – and the reason for all her sacrifice – was to make sure her child had a better quality of life and greater opportunity.

That aspiration for others has been on full display in 2020.

Volunteers fighting bushfires.

Healthcare workers fending-off a pandemic.

Cleaners and supermarket workers and truckies working around the clock to keep our economy going.

Teachers re-defining education, practically overnight.

Farmers and regional communities who had already copped drought and bushfires.

Small business reinventing themselves – and locals backing them in.

Trade unions agreeing to temporarily put aside hard fought industrial gains, to maintain jobs and keep businesses going.

Public servants reminding us of the honourable profession they belong to.

Australians rallying to help each other through tough times.

But if this crisis has reinforced what we know is good about our country, it has also revealed what is wrong with our economy.

The Budget figures tell the story.

An end to three decades of economic growth.

A million unemployed, with 160,000 more by Christmas.

A trillion dollars of debt.

Debt which had already doubled under this Government now 4 times that which the Coalition inherited.

And there were the damning silences.

Too many Australians are in insecure work – the first to be laid off, with low wages and few entitlements.

... and this Budget said nothing about that.

Too many women are shut off from economic opportunity – earning less and retiring with less.

... and this Budget said nothing to change that.

Too many family budgets pushed to breaking point by the cost of childcare.

... and this Budget said nothing to help with that.

Too many older Australians who built this country are being treated without the respect and dignity they deserve.

Too many older Australians are lonely prisoners of a broken aged care system.

Facilities run for the highest profits at the lowest standards.

A care economy workforce in childcare, aged care and disability care that is overworked and underpaid.

And Tuesday's Budget said nothing and did nothing about that.

How can the Government push the national debt to a trillion dollars and yet leave these fundamental problems unresolved?

Tonight, as Labor Leader I want to outline how we can change this for the better.

How we can emerge from this crisis with a

stronger economy and a fairer society.

The pandemic has shown that Labor's values of fairness, security and the power of government to change lives for the better are the right values in a crisis.

They are also the right values for the recovery.

Throughout this crisis, my colleagues and I have been constructive.

As the party that led Australia safely through the Global Financial Crisis, we understand, that in the middle of an emergency, the priority is on urgent action.

Still, we sought to make improvements including arguing for wage subsidies, which the Prime Minister rejected as "very dangerous".

We wanted casuals, universities and the arts to be included. This would have saved tens of thousands of jobs.

We warned of the damage caused by a smash-and-grab on superannuation, forcing desperate people to raid their own retirement savings while they waited for support to arrive.

We called for Telehealth and mental health support.

We backed the trade unions call for the Government to introduce a national scheme of paid pandemic leave so no-one had to choose between turning up to work sick or putting food on the table.

Our constructive approach contrasts with the Coalition during the GFC which voted against the Rudd Governments economic stimulus to protect jobs – and complained about the debt they inherited which was one quarter of the debt created by the Morrison Government.

The only legacy delivered by this Budget is trillion dollar debt.

A reform desert.

The decisions in this budget should be about setting Australia on a course for the next decade and beyond .

And when those decisions are wasteful, or unfair, or short-sighted or just plain wrong, then it's not the government who pays in the

long run, it's the whole country.

Just look at the NBN.

The Liberals have wasted years trashing Labor's plan for broadband delivered by fibre to the home and business.

They went out and bought 50,000 kilometres of copper – enough to wrap around the entire planet – so they could build a slow, third-rate network that was out of date before it started.

Now instead of leading the world on internet speed, business connectivity and online learning, Australia is playing catch-up.

If we're going to come out of this recession stronger and fairer, then our country needs a plan to ensure no-one is left behind, and no-one is held back.

Our plan to take Australia from recession to recovery is this:

- Rehire our workers.
- Rewire our economy.
- Recharge workforce participation of women.
- And rebuild our nation.

Labor knows education is the key to opportunity.

Our schools, TAFE and vocational education and universities are vital national institutions.

And making sure a quality education is accessible and affordable for every

Australian doesn't just open doors of opportunity for individuals, it makes us a smarter, more productive, more future-ready country.

And investing in education needs to begin at the beginning – with quality childcare.

We all know how much our kids change and learn and grow before they're at school.

Ninety per cent of human brain development occurs in the first five years of life.

What children learn at childcare is so vital for giving our kids the best possible start. But the current system of caps and subsidies and thresholds isn't just confusing and costly, it actually penalises the families it's meant to help.

Right around Australia, instead of childcare supporting families where both parents want to work...the costs – and the tax system – actively

discourage this.

And – as is too often the case – it's working mums who cop the worst of it.

For millions of working women, it's simply not worth working more than three days a week.

This derails careers, it deprives working women of opportunities they've earned.

And it costs workplaces – not just day-to-day productivity but years of valuable experience and knowledge and skills.

If I'm elected Prime Minister, I'm going to fix this.

I announce that a Labor Government will, from 1 July 2022, remove the annual cap on the childcare subsidy, eliminating once and for all, the disincentive to work more hours.

And we will increase the maximum Child Care subsidy to 90 per cent – cutting costs for 97 per cent of all families in the system.

And we will order the ACCC to design a price regulation mechanism that will ensure every taxpayer dollar spent flows directly through to savings for Australian families.

This is real reform. It will boost women's workforce participation, boost productivity and get Australia working again. Building a childcare system that works for families will turbocharge productivity in workplaces, delivering a much-needed boost in economic growth of up to 4 billion dollars a year.

For me, the principle is very simple:

Early education is vital for our children's future. And childcare is an essential service for families – and for the economy.

So our long term goal – and the mission we will set for the Productivity Commission which will be asked to report in the first term of a Labor Government – is to investigate moving to a 90 per cent subsidy for child care for every Australian family.

Labor created Medicare – universal health care. We created the NDIS – universal support for people with disability. We created superannuation – universal retirement savings for workers.

And – if I'm Prime Minister – I will make quality, affordable childcare universal too.

This global pandemic has exposed the terrible damage seven years of Liberal Government has done to Australian manufacturing.

I don't want our country to always be the last link in a worldwide supply chain.

My vision is for us to have the skills and smarts and people and industry to make things here and sell them on the global market.

So I want to talk about Labor's plan for a Future Made in Australia.

A mass mobilisation of resources, an across-the-board strategy for:

- Job creation
- Training and skills
- Lower energy prices
- Infrastructure
- Government purchasing
- Manufacturing and construction

A plan to grow our economy out of this recession – and build for the future too.

The first policy I announced as Labor leader was to build on the success of the Infrastructure Australia model and create Jobs and Skills Australia.

This is about joining-up the needs of our economy now – with training opportunities for the future.

We have a shortage of nurses, welders, brick layers, engineers, and hairdressers.

Yet under this government, there are 140,000 fewer people doing an apprenticeship or traineeship than there were seven years ago.

We want to equip every Australian with the skills for a good secure job.

And we want to make sure every employer has access to a well-trained Australian workforce.

And right at the heart of our plan for skills and training is the great institution of public TAFE.

But there's more government can – and should – do.

Every year, the Commonwealth spends billions of taxpayer dollars on building and upgrading roads, maintaining railways and repairing bridges.

To deliver maximum public value for money, Labor will create an Australian Skills Guarantee.

On every major work site receiving Federal Government funding, one out of 10 workers



This is real reform. It will boost women's workforce participation, boost productivity and get Australia working again. Building a childcare system that works for families will turbocharge productivity in workplaces, delivering a much-needed boost in economic growth of up to 4 billion dollars a year.

employed will be an apprentice, a trainee or cadet.

These common sense measures will train tens of thousands of workers.

We will also consider how this principle can be extended to Federal Government subsidised sectors like aged care, disability care and childcare in co-operation with providers.

And we'll bring the same approach to defence acquisitions too.

Over the next decade, there is \$270 billion of defence spending on the books.

These investments in national security should also deliver a dividend for national skills, training, research and manufacturing.

A Labor Government will implement concrete rules to maximise local content and create local jobs.

At best, the Liberals' approach is all over the shop when it comes to Australian content.

Remember when one of this Liberal Government's Defence Minister said he wouldn't trust Australians to build a canoe.

Australians will never forget that it was this Government that drove Holden, Ford and other car makers out of Australia, taking tens of thousands of jobs in auto manufacturing, servicing and the supply chain with them.

This wasn't just dumb and devastating in the short term.

Cutting down the Australian auto industry also cut Australia off from the next round of opportunities, dealing us out of a new wave of technology that could have been made in Elizabeth and Altona and Geelong but instead is being made in Detroit and Tokyo

It's the same at a state level.

Liberal Governments have consistently said we can't build trains here.

And yet the ones they've bought from overseas have been too long for our stations, or too narrow for our tracks, or too tall for our tunnels.

Last December I visited the Downer EDI site in Maryborough, Queensland where skilled Aussie workers are refitting rail carriages purchased from overseas by the former Newman LNP Government.

This work is being done in a factory that's been building quality trains since the 19th Century.

Our country has the skills and the knowhow. What's missing is a government that believes in manufacturing and has a plan to deliver.

Tonight, I announce that a Labor Government will create a National Rail Manufacturing Plan. We will provide leadership to the states and work with industry to identify and optimise the opportunities to build trains here in Australia – for freight and for public transport. Labor will invest in the skills and research and training to kickstart the next generation of Australian manufacturing jobs. And we'll deliver the affordable, reliable energy to power industry into the future.

The Liberals have had 22 energy policies in eight years. And all they have to show for it are higher electricity prices and higher emissions.

Australia can do so much better.

We can be a renewable energy superpower, with clean energy powering a new era of metal manufacturing and hydrogen production.

Labor has a clear target to tackle Climate Change – net zero carbon pollution by 2050.

Every State and Territory Government – Labor and Liberal – supports this goal. The Business Council, the Australian Industry Group, the Australian Energy Council and the National Farmers Federation agree on it.

Qantas and Santos and BHP and a host of other major companies all back it too.

Everyone but the Morrison Government, which is frozen in time while the world warms around it.

Of course, there's a lot more we can do right now to make energy more affordable.

Australia's electricity network was designed for a different century. For a time when solar panels ran pocket calculators, not the 1 in 4 households which have rooftop solar.

The current network takes no account of the rise of renewables as the cheapest new energy source, and doesn't help link these new sources up to the national grid.

A Labor Government will tackle this head on.

We will establish a new Rewiring the Nation Corporation to rebuild and modernise the national energy grid.

By using the Commonwealth's ability to borrow at lower interest rates, it will be done at the lowest possible cost.

The projects needed to rebuild the grid have all been identified in the Australian Energy Market Operator's Integrated System Plan. The planning work is done.

Rebuilding the grid will create thousands of jobs – particularly in regional Australia – and deliver up to \$40 billion in benefits.

Fixing transmission is technology neutral and will allow the market to drive least cost, new energy production.

Reforming childcare, rebuilding the National Energy Grid and revitalising Australian manufacturing are at the heart of Labor's plans for job creation over the next decade

But in the middle of the first recession in 30 years – we know Australia needs a plan to create jobs, right now.

One of the fastest ways to lift economic growth and get tradies back on the tools is to invest in social housing.

There's 100,000 social housing dwellings around the country that are in urgent need of repair. The roof leaks, they're full of mould or damp, the plumbing isn't up to scratch. If these were MPs offices they'd be fixed overnight.

These are people's homes – and they're a job creation plan ready and waiting in every city and town. Tradies could be ordering from suppliers today, they could be on site, tomorrow.

And the pipeline of work doesn't stop at existing houses that need fixing. There are new houses that need to be built too. 200,000 Australians are on waiting lists for social housing.

I grew up in public housing. I know – when you don't have much – having a roof over your head provides security and makes all the difference.

So many economists have identified investing in social housing as the best way to provide immediate stimulus to the economy. It would create thousands of jobs in construction and the trades and, just like for my mum, it would give thousands of people a better life.

The pandemic has exposed Australia's vulnerability.

This has particularly impacted the elderly with more than 670 deaths in aged care, in a system described by the Royal Commission in their one word title of the Interim Report issued last year, as "neglect".

This Budget has done nothing to address this neglect and nothing to ensure aged care residents have enough nurses, carers and other staff that they need and deserve.

The Royal Commission declared last week there was still no plan for aged care.

It is also the case that our pandemic preparedness was poor. The last national pandemic preparedness exercise was run by the Rudd Government in 2008.

A Labor Government will establish an Australian Centre for Disease Control to bring us into line with other advanced economies.

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On Tuesday night, Australia needed a plan to seize the economic opportunities of the next decade.

We are, after all, located in the fastest growing region of the world in human history.

Instead, we got an incoherent grab bag, fixated on the photo opportunities of next week.

And that's the defining flaw of this government – and this Prime Minister.

They think an announcement is the end in itself. Always there for the photo opp, never there for the follow up. We see it time and time again.

Remember the "Back in Black" mugs they were selling last Budget, ahead of delivering the biggest deficit in Australian history? Perhaps the mugs should have said "dirty deeds, done dirt cheap".

When you look at the waste and the grift and the pork barreling exposed by the Australian National Audit Office that's had its funding cut in this Budget as payback...

the Sports Rorts scandal
the \$30 million paid for airport land that was
worth just \$3 million....

Two years after announcing they would support a
National Integrity Commission, the legislation is as
visible as a Morrison Government surplus.

A Labor Government will deliver a national
anti-corruption commission to restore faith in
our democracy.

In seven years, the gap between what they've
promised on infrastructure – and what they've
delivered – is nearly \$7 billion.

They turn up, they turn over the first sod and years
later weeds are growing on the empty lot.

And in spite of a Budget drowning in red ink,
there were no new game changing infrastructure
projects funded.

As Australia's first Infrastructure Minister, I know
what a missed opportunity this budget represents.

Then there's the Emergency Response Fund.

This \$4 billion fund was created in the aftermath
of the catastrophic bushfires with \$200 million
available each financial year from 2019-2020.

It's for recovery, as well as resilience in the lead
up to bushfire seasons. Not a dollar has been
spent. Not one.

This week I spoke to Zoey Salucci in Cobargo. The
Prime Minister should remember her. She was the
young pregnant woman who had lost her home and
asked for more help for the Rural Fire Service. She
was reluctant to shake his hand.

Zoey's son Phoenix turned 6 months old this week,
named after the Greek mythological bird that
obtains new life by rising from the ashes.

When Phoenix was born, Zoey, her husband
and their two-year-old daughter Uma were still
living in a van. She despairs that so many of her
community are still living in temporary caravans
on land that is yet to be cleared.

Yet the \$4 billion funding announced remains
untouched. That's why the true test of this Budget
isn't this week's headlines. It's not the rhetoric or the
promises. It's whether money reaches the people
who need it.

Australia is at a crossroad. It's not of our choosing
but the choices we make could change everything.
This is an opportunity to reset and renew.

There was a time when the average wage let you
buy a house. When secure jobs with sick pay were
the norm. Before the balance tipped so far one way
that ordinary people were left vulnerable.

Let's use this opportunity to get the balance right again.

Let's put security back into work – so that people
don't have to choose between their bank account
and their health. Let's transform childcare so that
it's affordable and accessible to every family. Let's
fix our aged care system so that it's driven by
dignity and care, not profit.

The choices we make now will define who we are in
the future, so ask yourself – what sort of country do
you want?

Do we want to return to the same work insecurity,
the same cuts to TAFE and uni's, the same 2nd rate
services for the bush, the same stale arguments
over climate change?

I want us to do better.

I want a country that makes things, creates wealth
– and shares it.

A country where the next generation inherit
opportunity and prosperity – not debt and doubt.

A country which respects our farmers and miners
in the regions and our cleaners and musicians in the
cities.

A country that respects those who've come
across the sea to enrich our society – and one
that recognises the privilege of having the world's
oldest continuous culture and recognises First
Nations people in our Constitution – and gives
them a Voice to this Parliament.

A country where – when the going gets tough –
government is on your side.

That's the Australia I believe in.

That's the better future I want us to build together.

The year 2020 has been the year from hell.

But during this calamity we learnt a lot about
ourselves. And about each other.

A man called Tom Uren was the closest person in
my life I had to a father figure.

Tom fought in World War 2, he spent his 21st birthday
as a Japanese prisoner of war on the notorious Thai-
Burma Railway.

He never talked much about what he went through.

But he always said Australians survived because of a simple code:

The healthy looked after the sick, the strong looked after the weak, the young looked after the old.

Those values are at the heart of what it is to be an Australian.

And those values are why I'm optimistic about our country's future.

Because just as our people have rallied to each other and risen to the challenges of this pandemic.

I know Australians can seize the opportunities of the recovery, seize the chance to rebuild and renew our country.

But people can't do it on their own.

My Mum battled a ton of adversity to give me opportunities she never had.

But government played a part too: it put a roof over our head, it gave me an education and a start.

That's why I want to be Prime Minister.

Because I know government has the power to break down barriers of disadvantage, to change lives for the better.

I've seen it. I've lived it.

And that's what Labor's plans are all about:

- Creating jobs for today – and training our people for tomorrow.
- Making quality child care a right for all, not a luxury for some.
- Rebuilding our manufacturing sector.
- And powering our recovery with clean energy

Tonight, I've talked about how we can make this once-in-a-century crisis the beginning of a new era of Australian prosperity and Australian fairness.

With the right plans, the right policies – and the right leadership – I truly believe our country can make this moment our own.

Strength and fairness.

We can beat this recession, we can launch a recovery and we can build a future where no-one is held back and no-one is left behind.



